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SEGA
KNUCKLES
THE ECHIDNA
TM
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PENDERS • SPAZIANTE • GALAN
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KNUCKLES™
BOOK TWELVE

The Forgotten Tribe

Part Three of Three

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ATTENTION SONIC FANS: REMEMBER TO PICK UP SONIC ARCHIVES VOL. 15 FOR THE SECOND THRILLING ACT TO THIS STORY! AVAILABLE NOW!
--PLUG-ITOR

SONIC™ THE HEDGEHOG ARCHIVES VOLUME 15

Born to the most noble of Echidna houses, the latest to continue the family heritage and responsibility as guardian of the floating island, defender of all from the forces of evil from the world beyond as well as those who would threaten within, he is none other than Knuckles the Echidna!

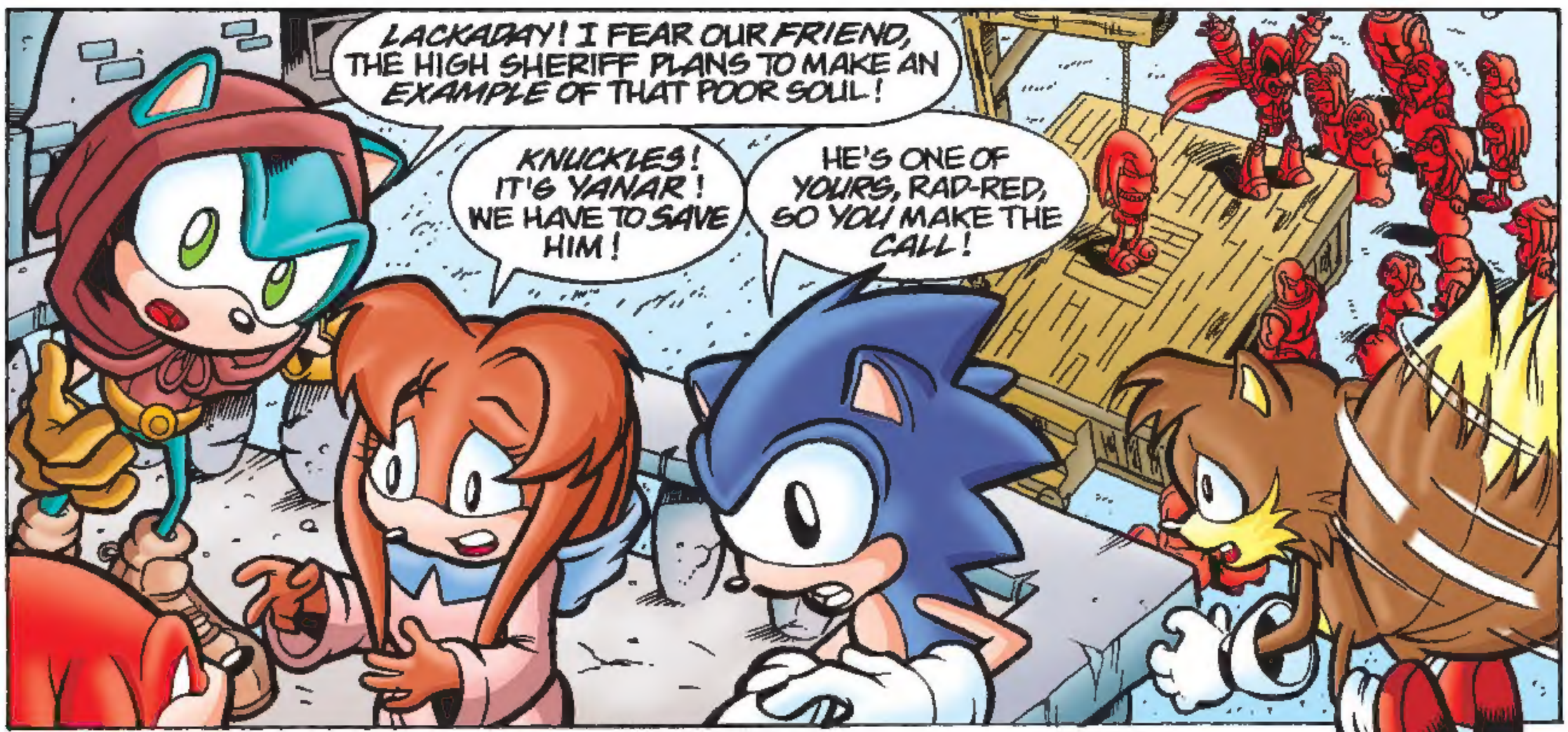
The story thus far...

A long time ago, when a comet on a collision course with Echidnaopolis threatened destruction, the majority of Echidnas agreed to a plan which resulted in the creation of The Floating Island. Another smaller group of Echidnas, however, wished to remain part of the land, and so traversed over the face of Mobius.

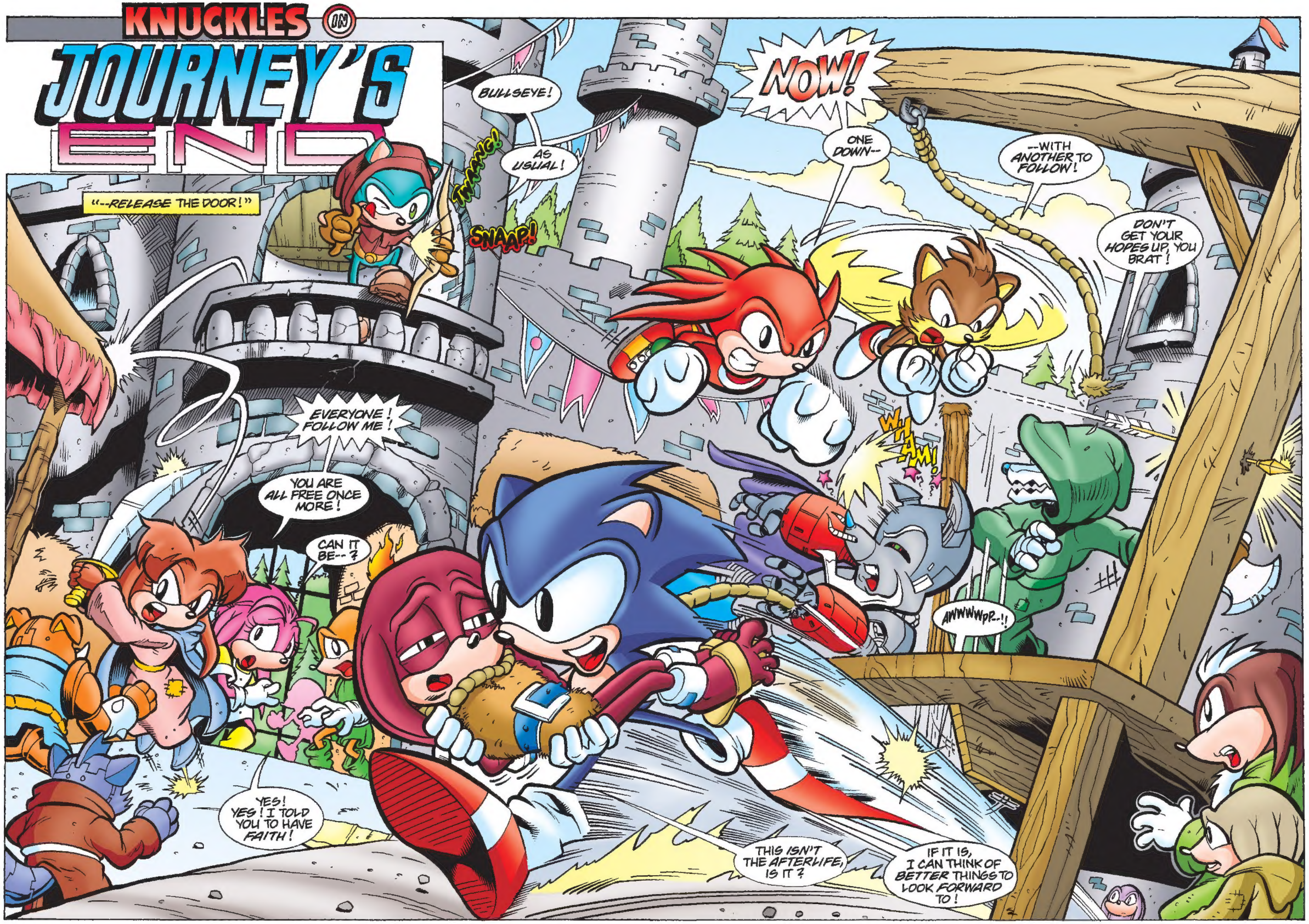
Through the centuries, destiny called upon leaders known as Mitres to shepherd the tribe to safety. Until recently, the Echidna known as Athair served as the latest Mitre until called upon to perform a higher task for the Ancient Walkers. Not wishing to abandon the tribe without a replacement, he selected his great-grandson Knuckles to serve in his stead.

Aided by the disciple Yanar, Knuckles proceeded to lead the tribe towards that which they sought: the land their kind originally sprang from. Unfortunately, along the way, two young Echidna boys wandered off, forcing Knuckles to search for them. During his absence, the tribe fell into the evil clutches of the High Sheriff of Snottingham, who promptly enslaved them in service of his bidding.

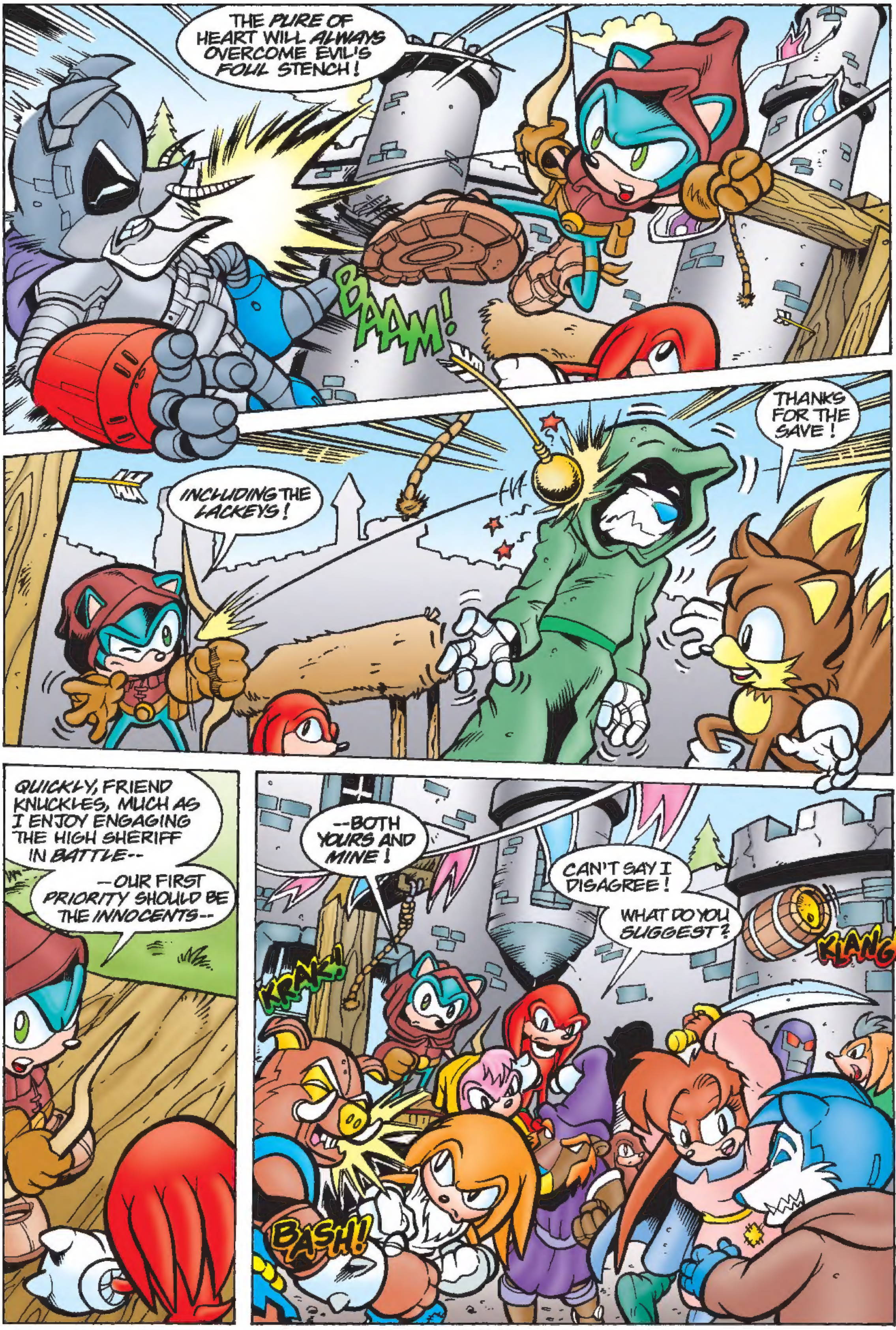
Dissatisfied with the tribe's efforts, the High Sheriff is now about to make an example of Yanar...

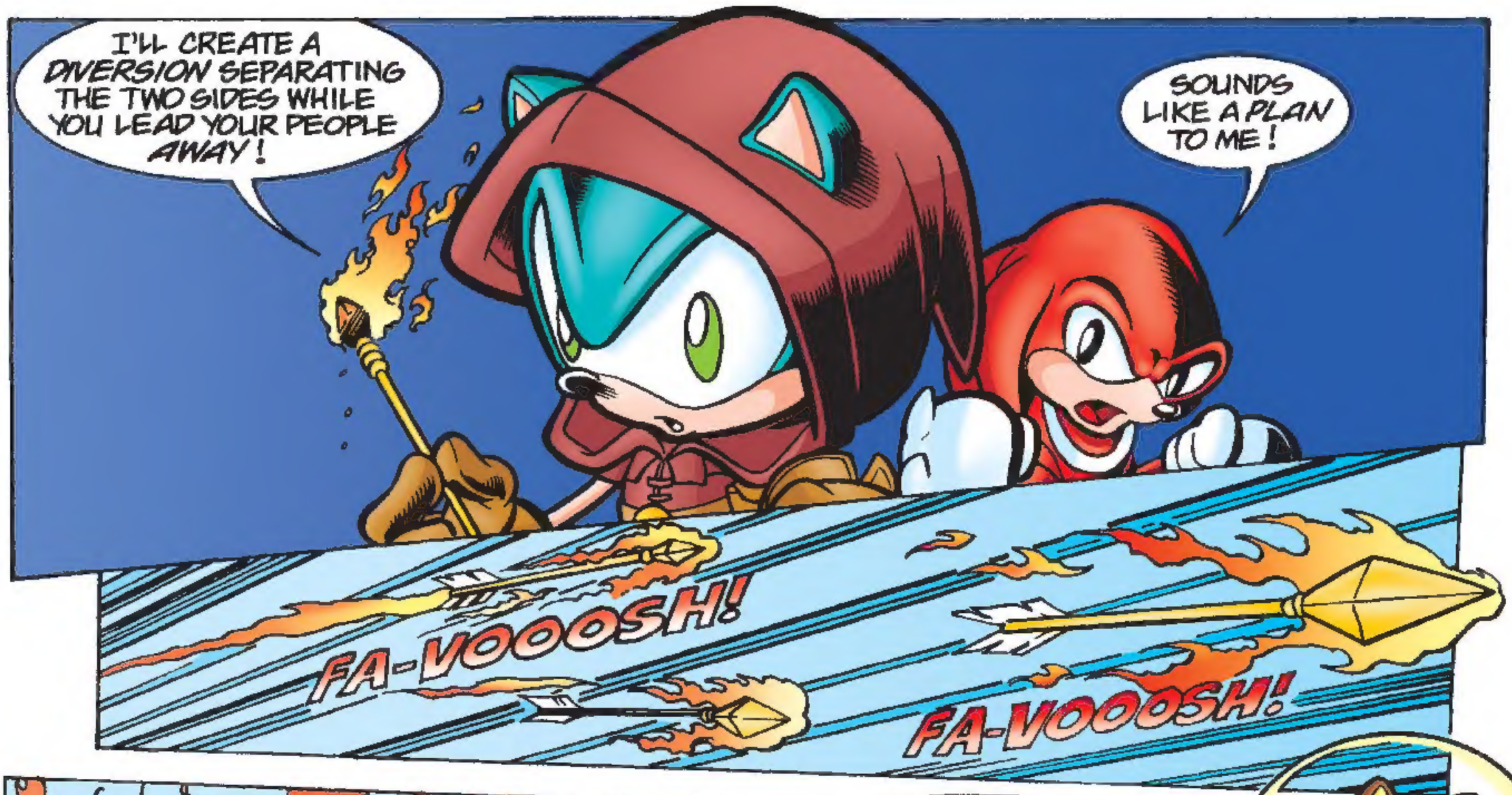

LACKADAY! I FEAR OUR FRIEND, THE HIGH SHERIFF PLANS TO MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF THAT POOR SOUL!
KNUCKLES! IT'S YANAR! WE HAVE TO SAVE HIM!
HE'S ONE OF YOURS, RAD-RED, SO YOU MAKE THE CALL!

OH-KAY!
WE'LL HAVE TO MOVE FAST, PEOPLE, SO HERE IT IS--
JUST BEFORE THE TRAP DOOR SPRINGS, ROB HAS TO CUT THE ROPE--
--LEAVING BIG BLUE TO GET YANAR AWAY FROM THE SCENE!
MEANWHILE, MARI-AN WILL LEAD THE TRIBE OUT OF HARM'S WAY!
WHAT ABOUT ME?
I DIDN'T FORGET YOU, LI'L GUY!
YOU AND ME--
"--GET TO TAKE OUT THE BAD GUYS!"
I'M SORRY I HAVE BUT ONE LIFE TO GIVE FOR MY PEOPLE!
HAVE YOU ANY LAST WORDS, KNAVE?
SO NOBLE, YET SO PATHETIC!
HANGMAN--


KNUCKLES IN
JOURNEY'S END
"--RELEASE THE DOOR!"
TWANG!
SNAAP!
BULLSEYE!
AS USUAL!
NOW!
ONE DOWN--
--WITH ANOTHER TO FOLLOW!
DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP, YOU BRAT!
EVERYONE! FOLLOW ME!
YOU ARE ALL FREE ONCE MORE!
CAN IT BE--?
YES! YES! I TOLD YOU TO HAVE FAITH!
WHAM!
AWWWWPP--!!
THIS ISN'T THE AFTERLIFE, IS IT?
IF IT IS, I CAN THINK OF BETTER THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO!

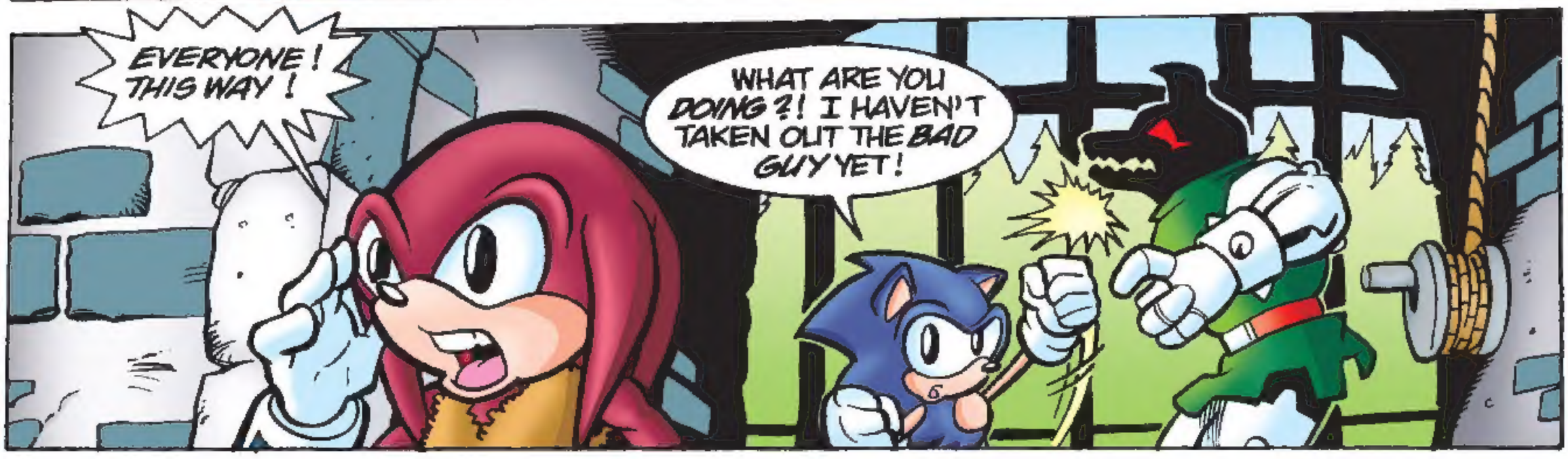
BACK, WRETCHED PEASANT.
IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN YOUR BEST TO OVERCOME THE HIGH SHERIFF!
WHOA! TALK ABOUT MISSING BY A WHISKER--!
WHOOOSH!
IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN YOUR BEST TO PUT ME AWAY, YOU TIN-PLATED TYRANT!
FOLLOW THE HEDGEHOG, EVERYONE!
HE'LL LEAD YOU TO SAFETY!
THAT LOOKS LIKE OUR TICKET OUT!
WE'LL SEE!
DOWN YOU GO, FRIEND!
YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY A FEATHERWEIGHT!
NOR, I SUSPECT, IS HE!
HAVEN'T YOU YET LEARNED?
METAL ALWAYS TRIUMPHS OVER FUR!
NOT ALWAYS, BASE VILLAIN!

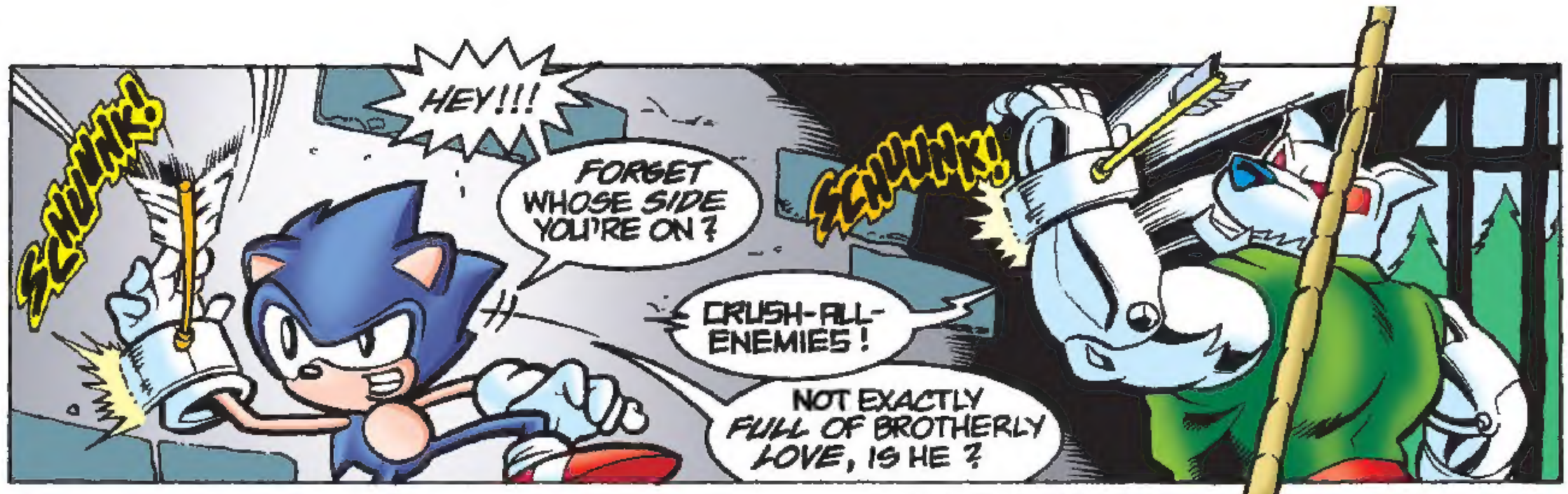

THE PURE OF HEART WILL ALWAYS OVERCOME EVIL'S FOUL STENCH!
BAAM!
THANKS FOR THE SAVE!
INCLUDING THE LACKEYS!
QUICKLY, FRIEND KNUCKLES, MUCH AS I ENJOY ENGAGING THE HIGH SHERIFF IN BATTLE--
--OUR FIRST PRIORITY SHOULD BE THE INNOCENTS--
--BOTH YOURS AND MINE!
CAN'T SAY I DISAGREE!
WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?
KLANG!
KRAK!
BASH!


I'LL CREATE A DIVERSION SEPARATING THE TWO SIDES WHILE YOU LEAD YOUR PEOPLE AWAY!
SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN TO ME!
FA-VOOOSH!
FA-VOOOSH!

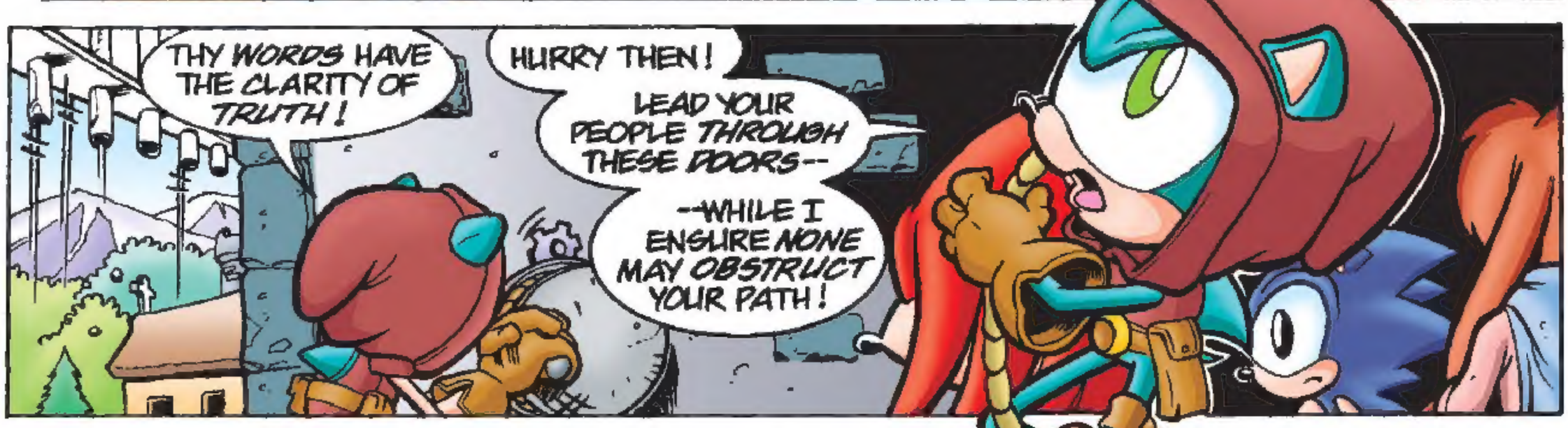
CRUSH! DESTROY!
FOR A VICAR OF THE CLOTH, PADRE, YOU'RE SURE ONE UNFRIENDLY DUDE!

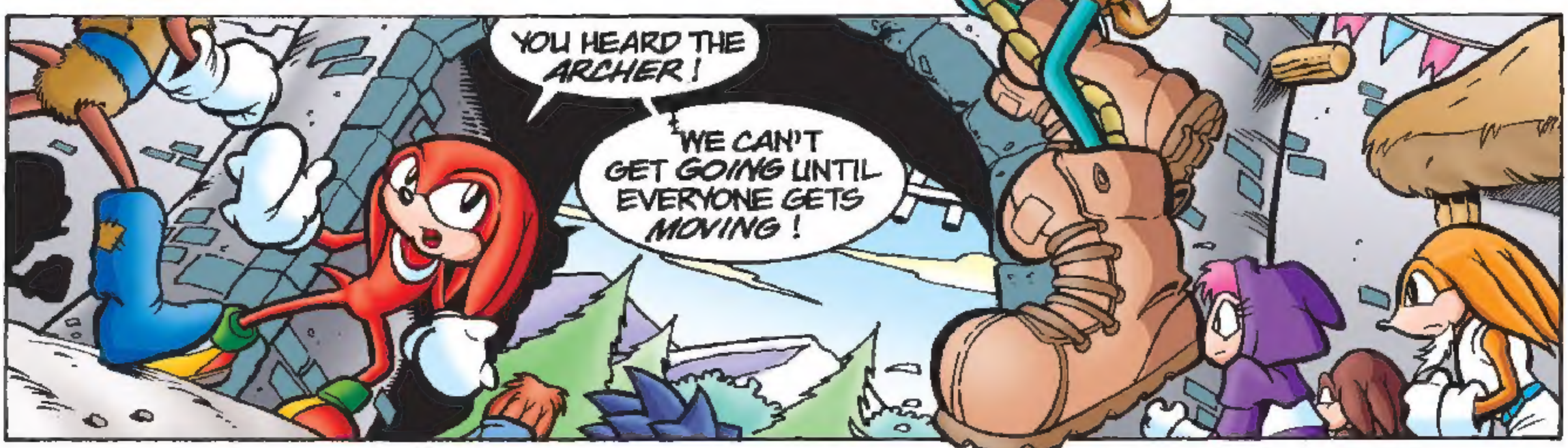
TIME-OUT, EVERYBODY!
NEXT ONE TAKES A SWING, ANSWERS TO ME!
STEP AWAY! THE FRIAR IS MY RESPONSIBILITY!

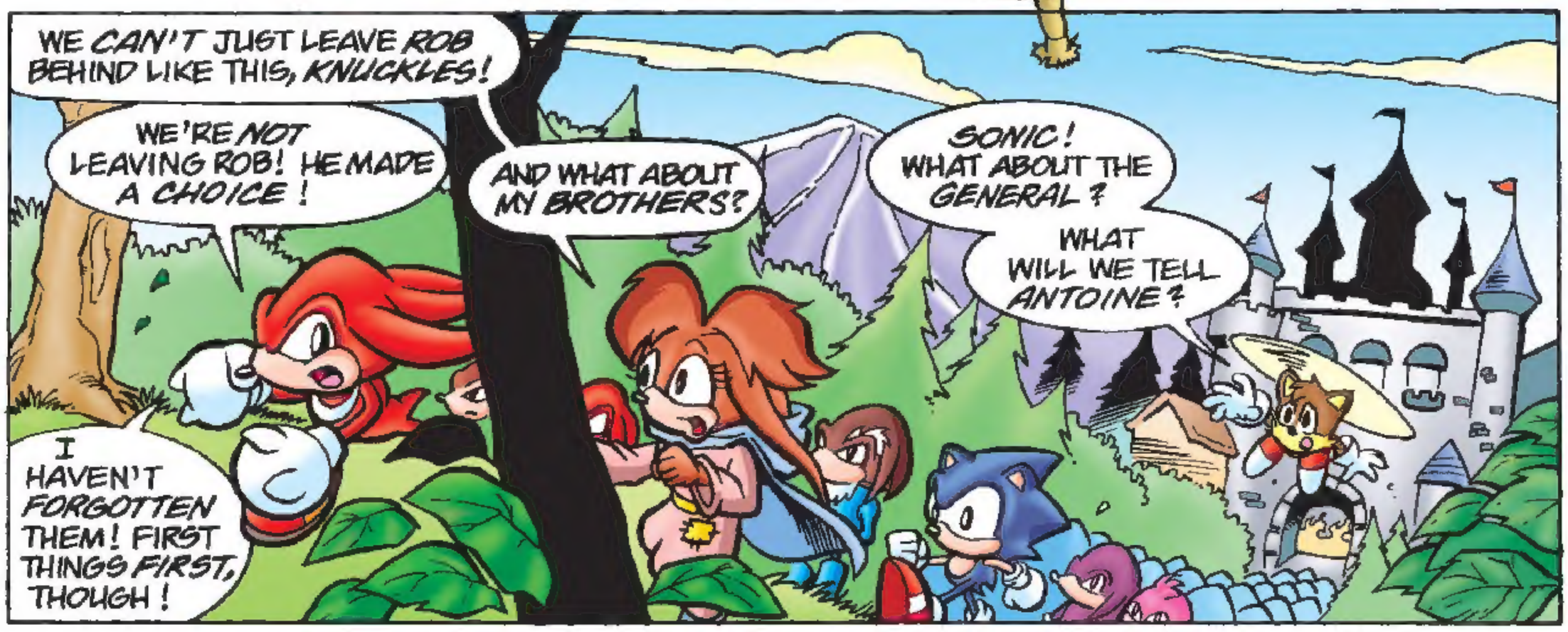

EVERYONE! THIS WAY!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! I HAVEN'T TAKEN OUT THE BAD GUY YET!


SCHUNK!
HEY!!!
FORGET WHOSE SIDE YOU'RE ON?
SCHUNK!
CRUSH-ALL-ENEMIES!
NOT EXACTLY FULL OF BROTHERLY LOVE, IS HE?

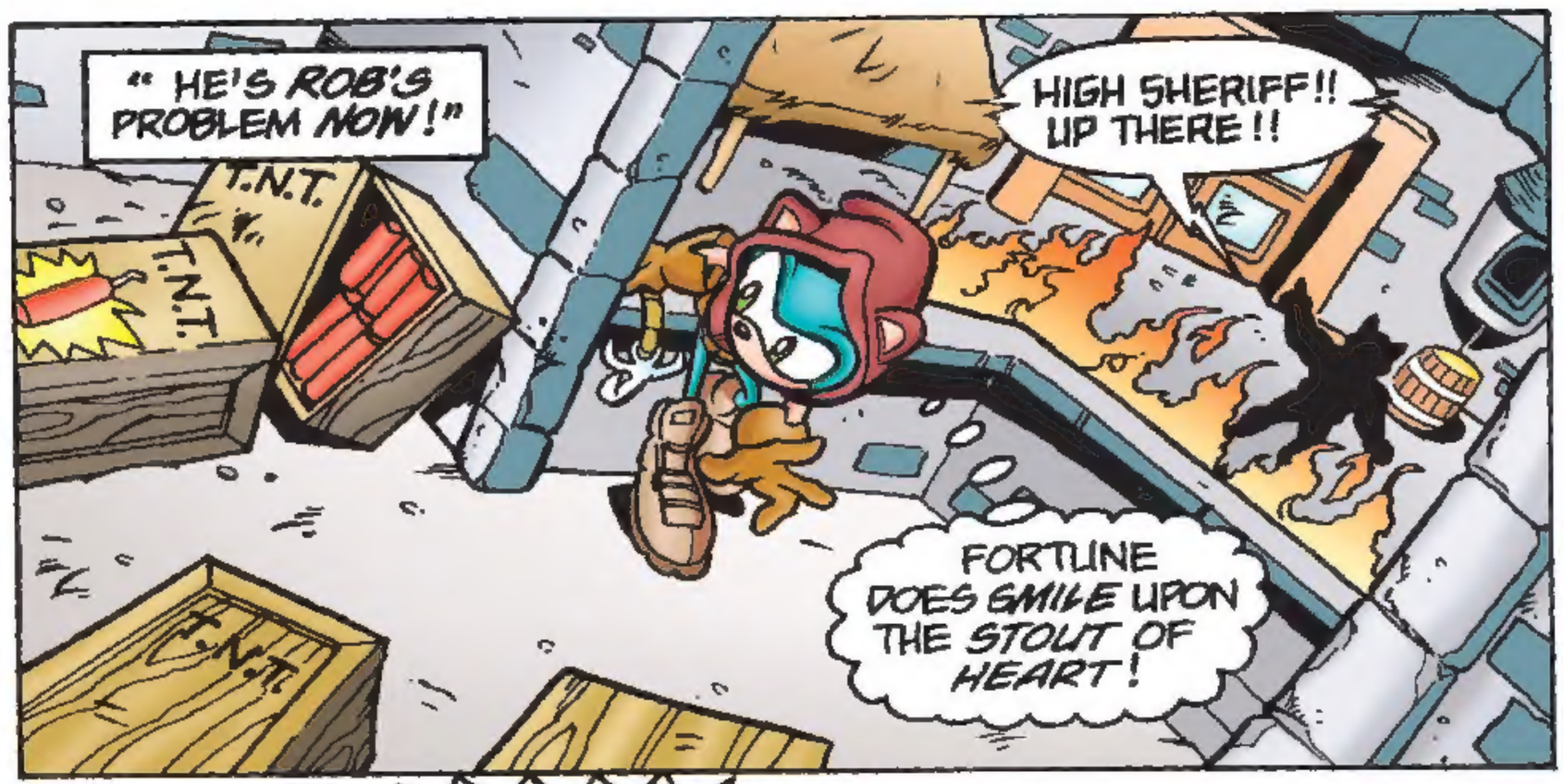
YOU HAVE TO ADMIT OL' BLUE HAS A POINT!
SOMEBODY'S BOUND TO BE HURT IF WE BRING YOUR GUYS WITH US!

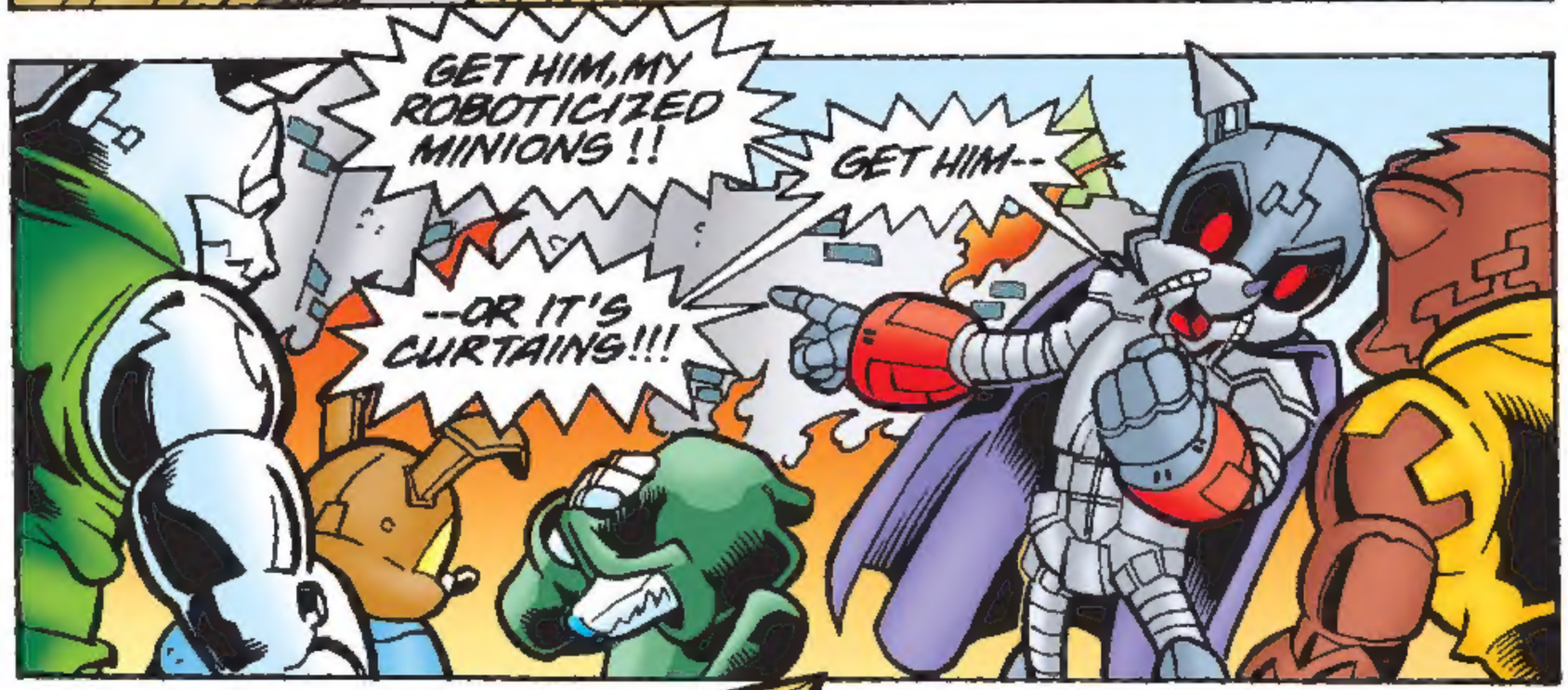

THY WORDS HAVE THE CLARITY OF TRUTH!
HURRY THEN!
LEAD YOUR PEOPLE THROUGH THESE DOORS--
--WHILE I ENSURE NONE MAY OBSTRUCT YOUR PATH!

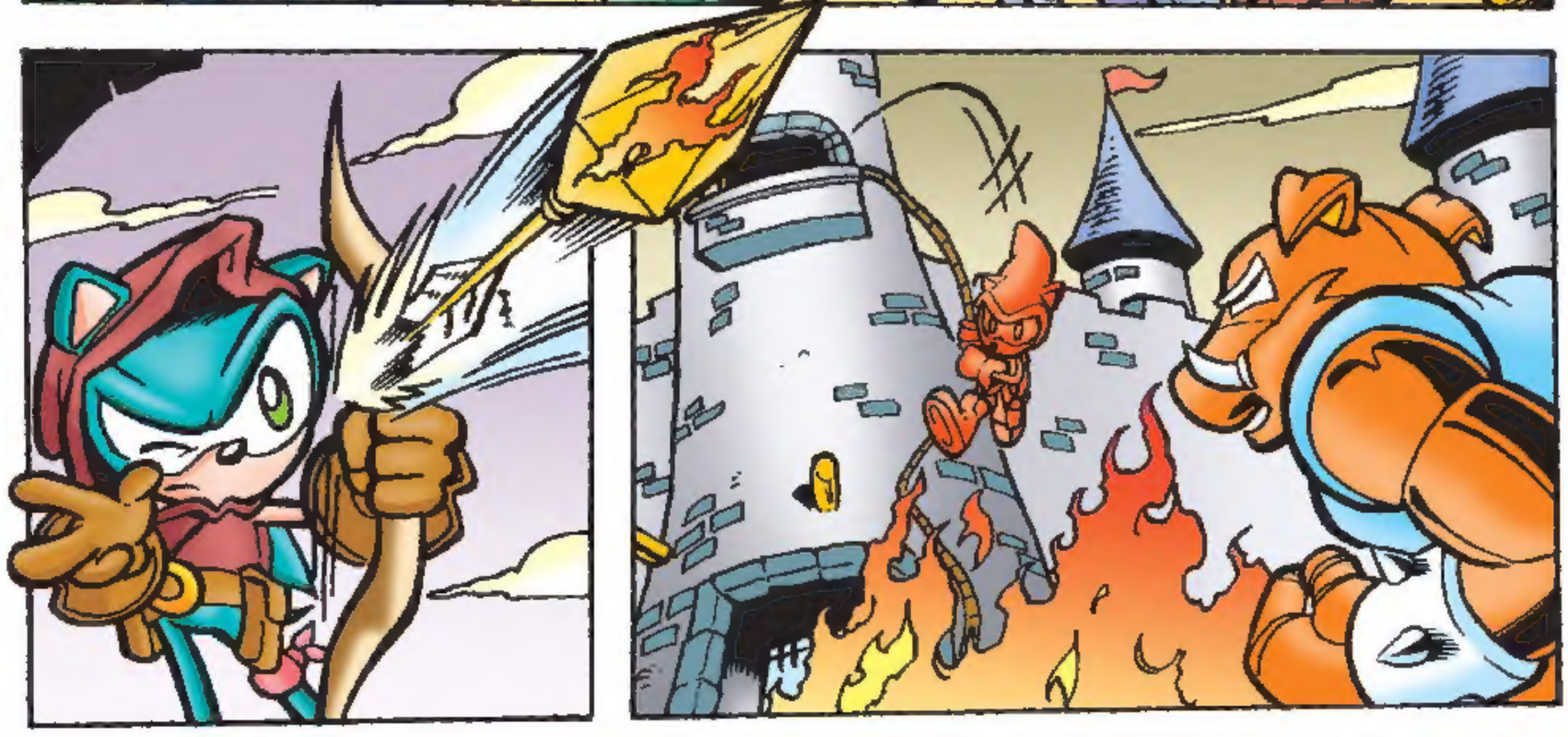

YOU HEARD THE ARCHER!
WE CAN'T GET GOING UNTIL EVERYONE GETS MOVING!

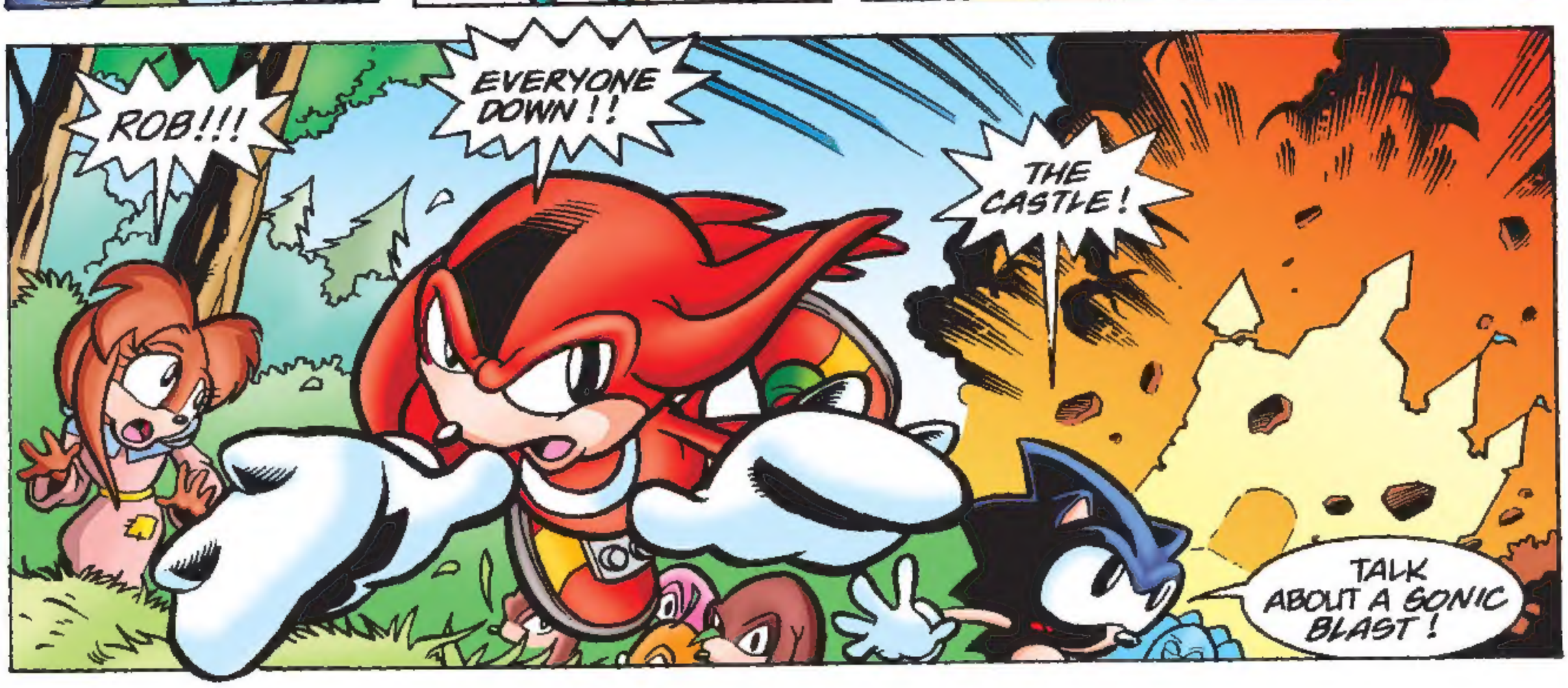

WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE ROB BEHIND LIKE THIS, KNUCKLES!
WE'RE NOT LEAVING ROB! HE MADE A CHOICE!
I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN THEM! FIRST THINGS FIRST, THOUGH!
AND WHAT ABOUT MY BROTHERS?
SONIC! WHAT ABOUT THE GENERAL?
WHAT WILL WE TELL ANTOINE?

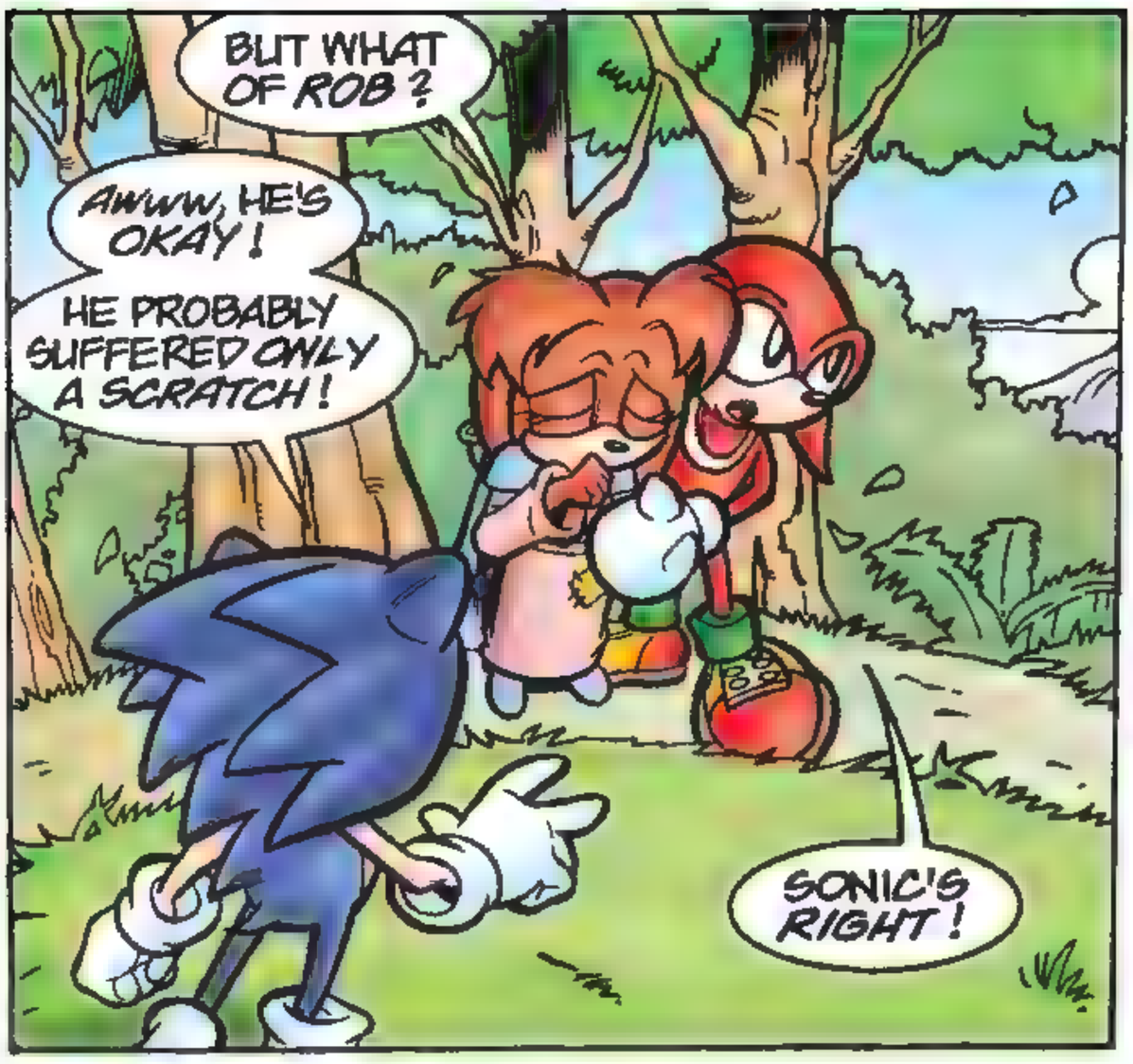
WE TELL ANTOINE ZIP!
UNTIL WE LANDED HERE WE WERE JUST AS CLUELESS!


" HE'S ROB'S PROBLEM NOW!"
T.N.T.
T.N.T.
T.N.T.
HIGH SHERIFF!! UP THERE!!
FORTUNE DOES SMILE UPON THE STOUT OF HEART!

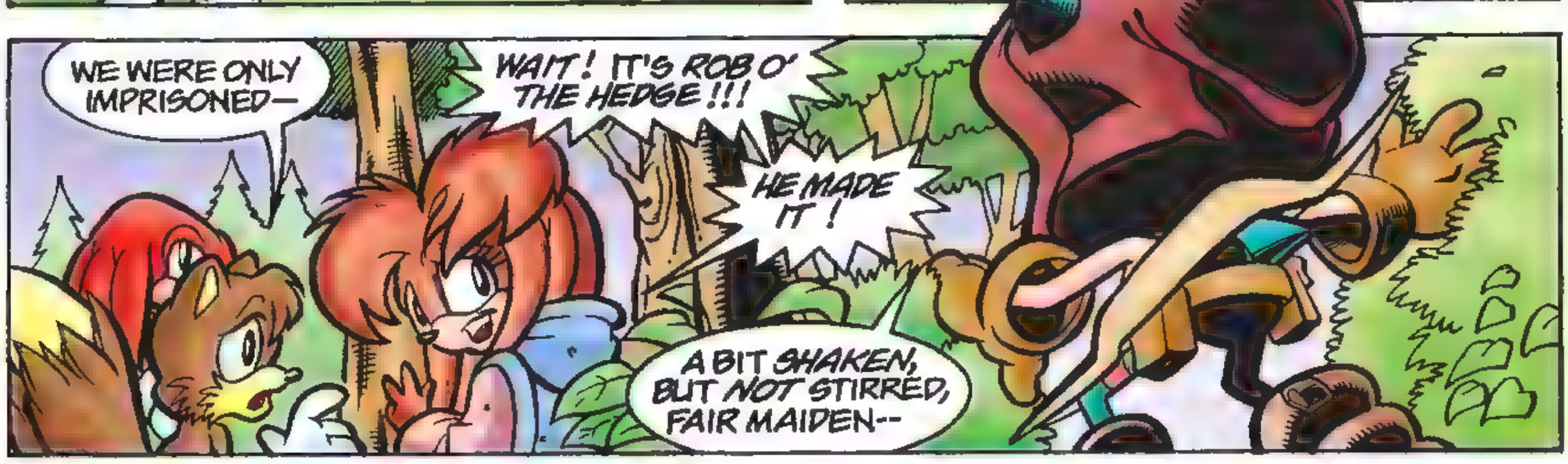

GET HIM, MY ROBOTICIZED MINIONS!!
GET HIM--
--OR IT'S CURTAINS!!!

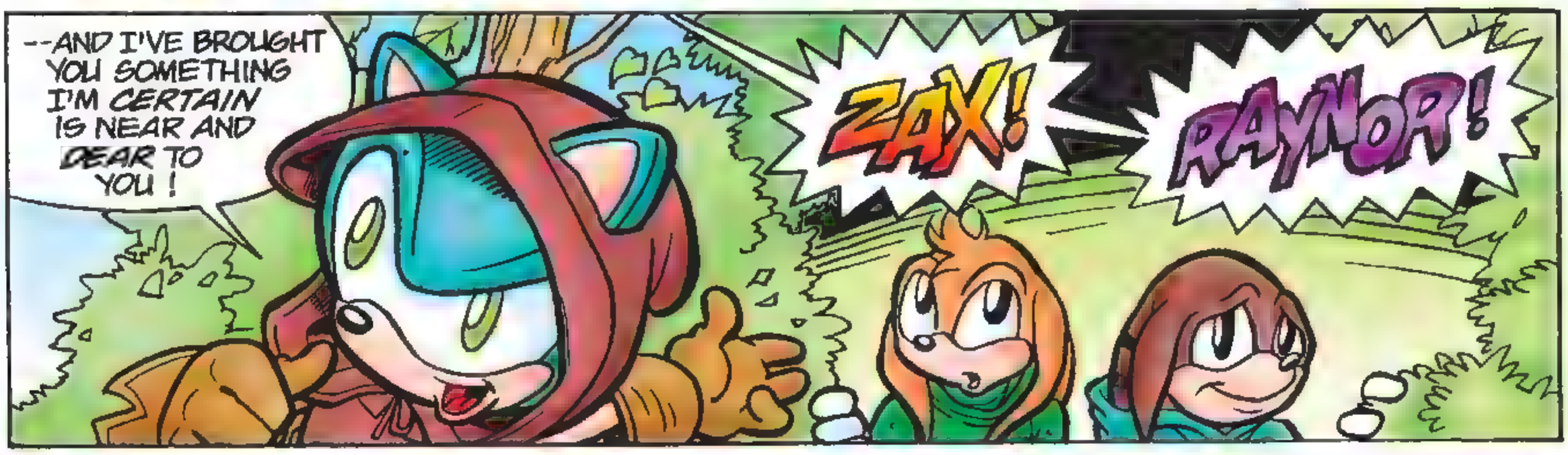


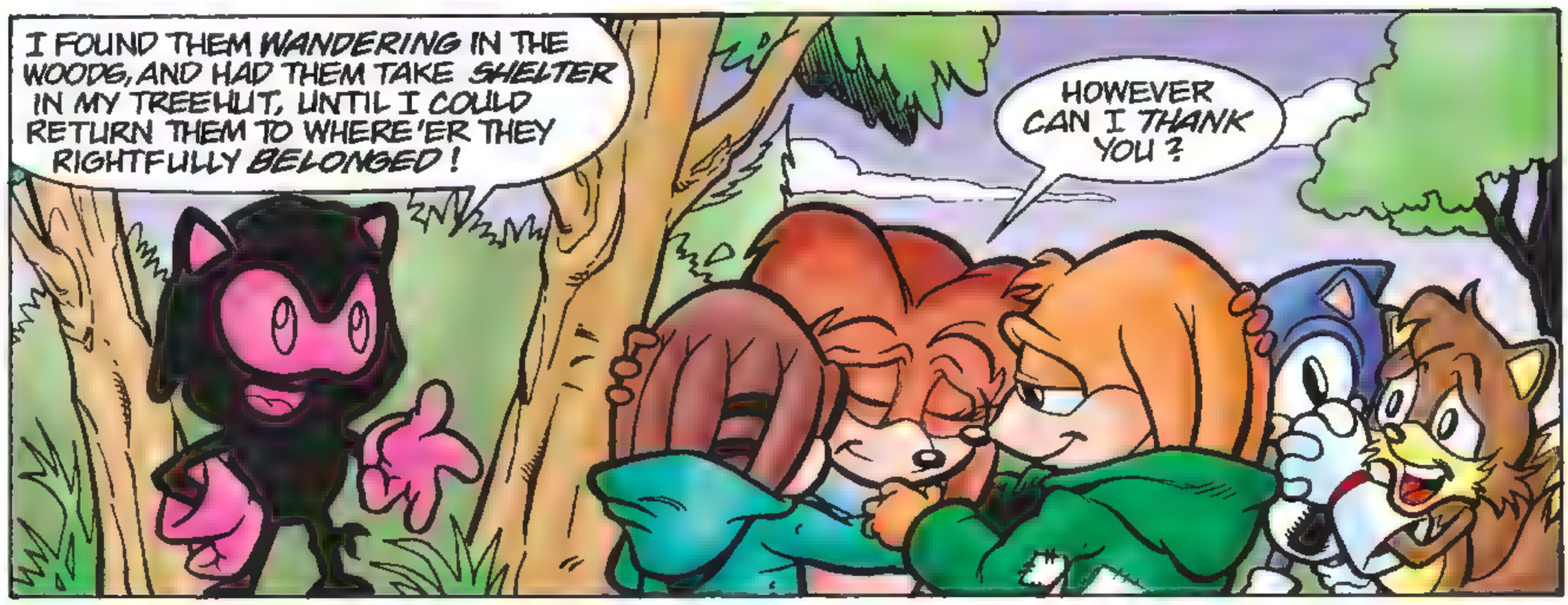

ROB!!!
EVERYONE DOWN!!
THE CASTLE!
TALK ABOUT A SONIC BLAST!

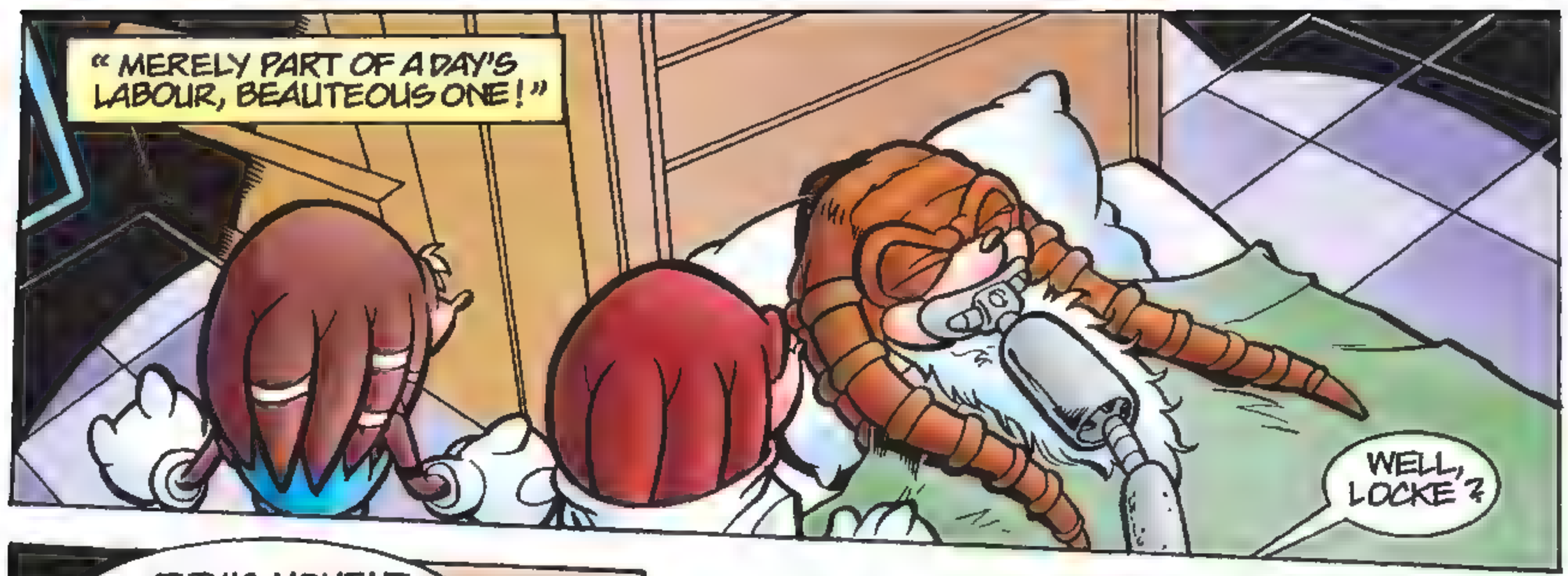

BUT WHAT OF ROB?
AWWW, HE'S OKAY!
HE PROBABLY SUFFERED ONLY A SCRATCH!
SONIC'S RIGHT!

IT WOULD BE A TRAGEDY IF WE LOST HIM AFTER ENDURING ALL THOSE YEARS OF HARDSHIP!
YEARS?

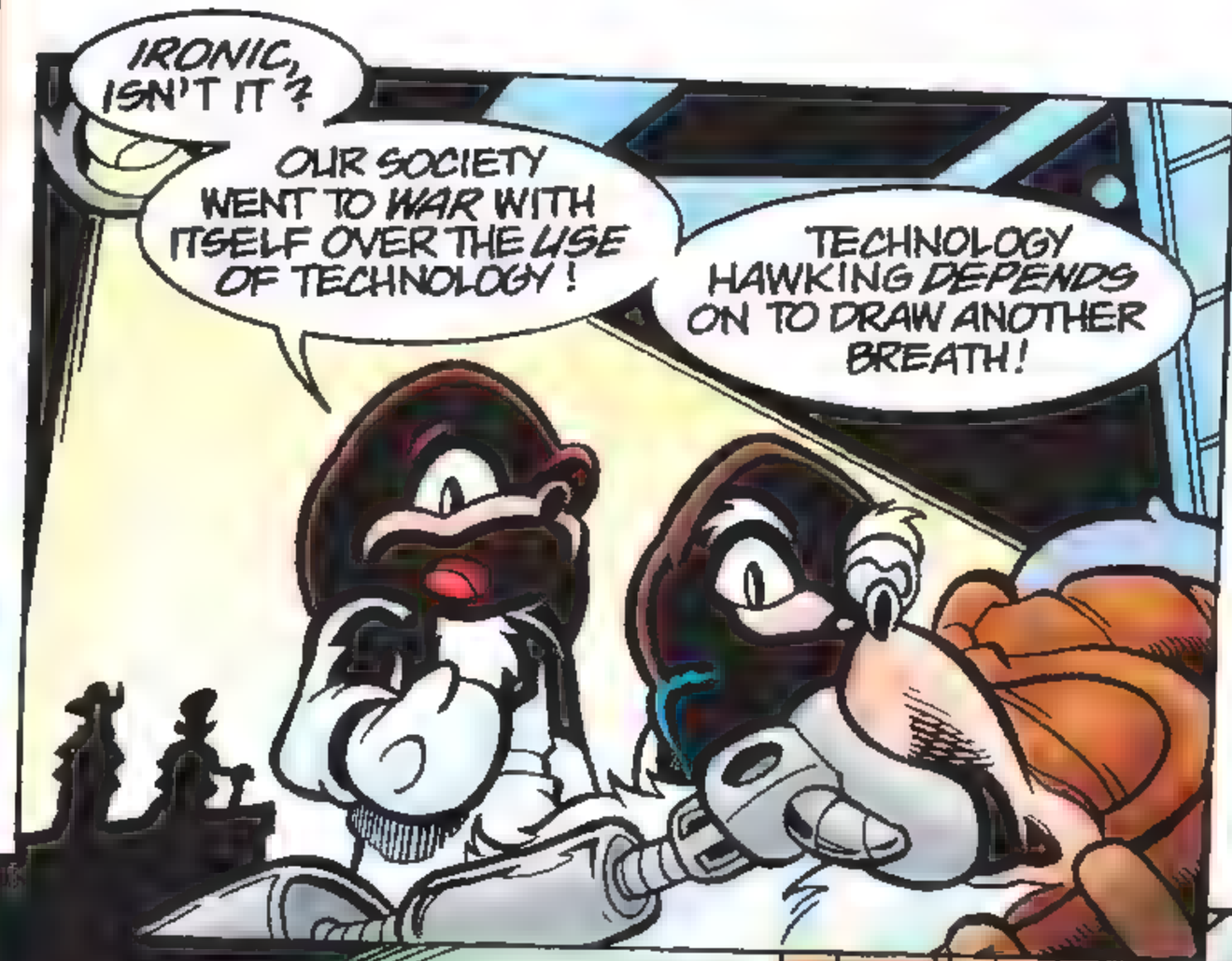

WE WERE ONLY IMPRISONED—
WAIT! IT'S ROB O' THE HEDGE!!!
HE MADE IT!
A BIT SHAKEN, BUT NOT STIRRED, FAIR MAIDEN--

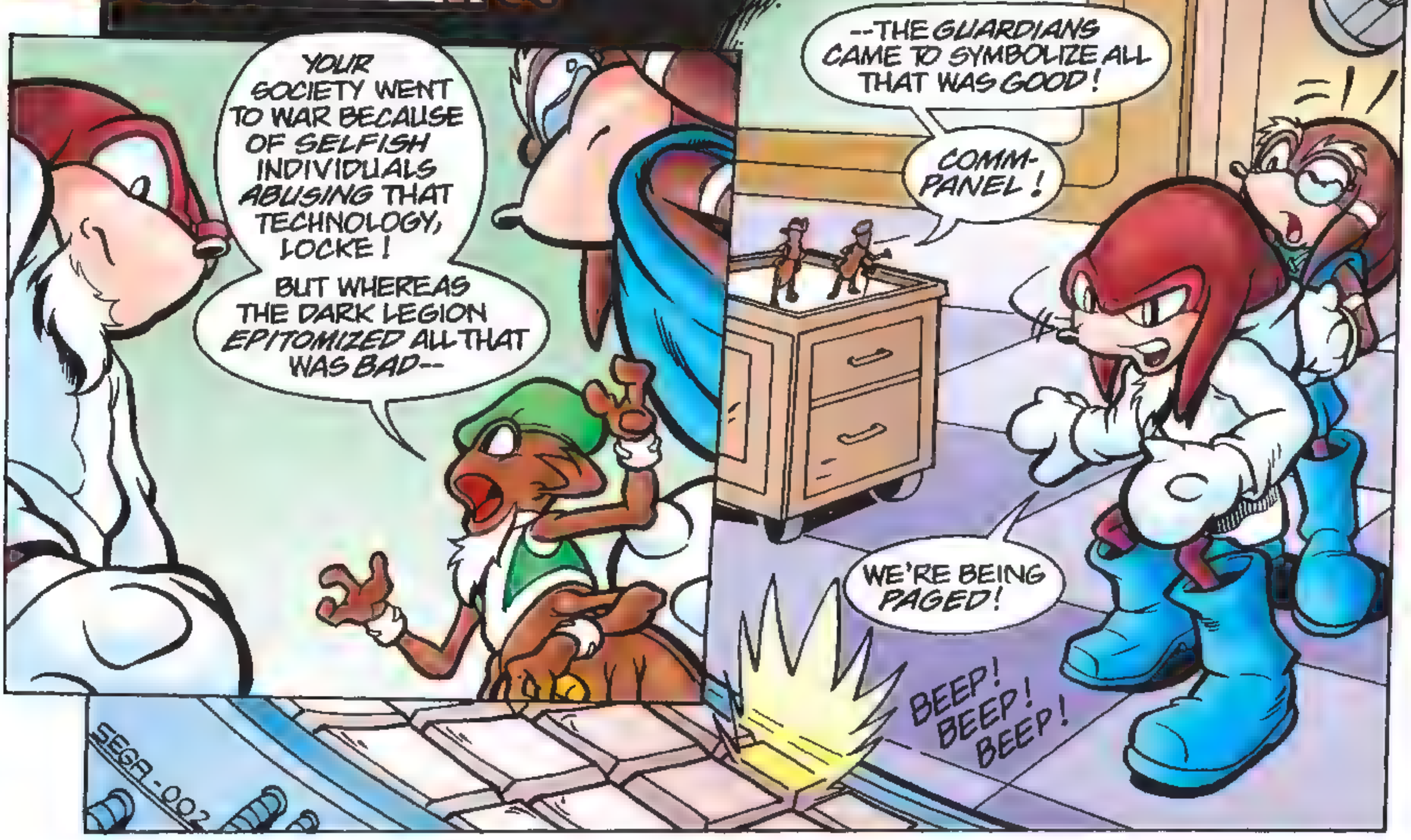

--AND I'VE BROUGHT YOU SOMETHING I'M CERTAIN IS NEAR AND DEAR TO YOU!
ZAX!
RAYNOR!

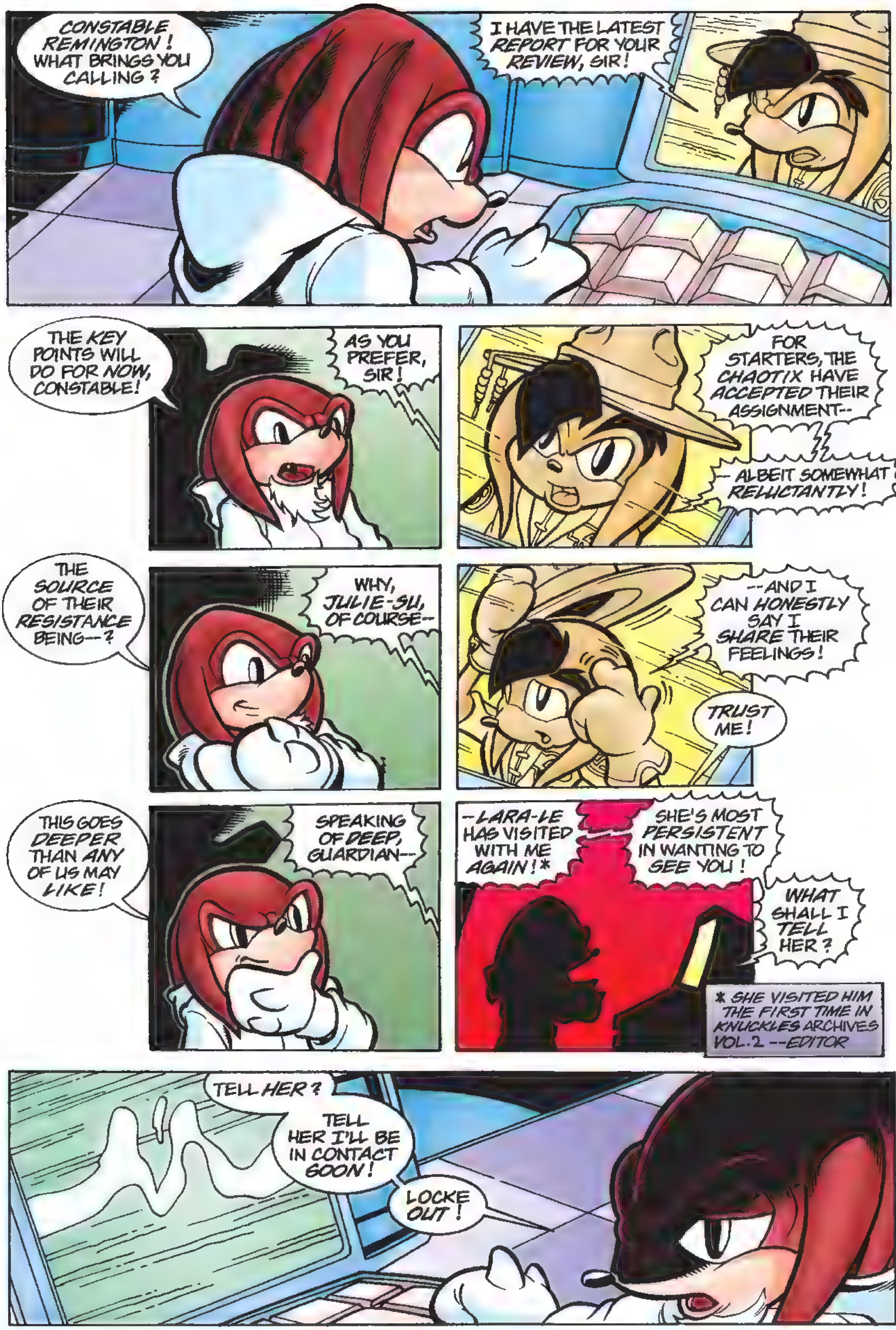

I FOUND THEM WANDERING IN THE WOODS, AND HAD THEM TAKE SHELTER IN MY TREEHUT, UNTIL I COULD RETURN THEM TO WHERE'ER THEY RIGHTFULLY BELONGED!
HOWEVER CAN I THANK YOU?


" MERELY PART OF A DAY'S LABOUR, BEAUTEOUS ONE!"
WELL, LOCKE?

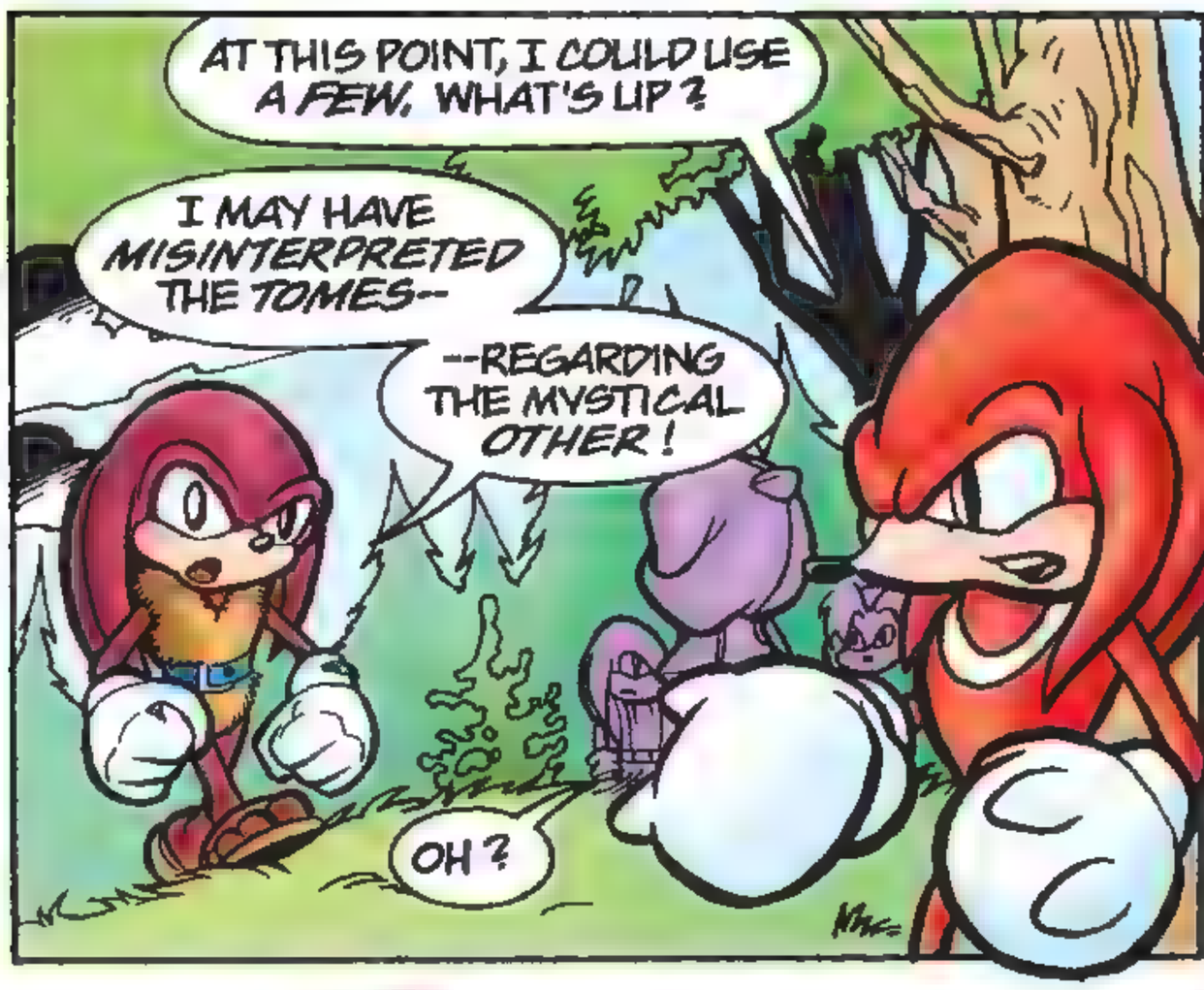
AT THIS MOMENT, DEO, HAWKING'S TOO WEAK TO PULL THROUGH BY HIMSELF!


IRONIC, ISN'T IT?
OUR SOCIETY WENT TO WAR WITH ITSELF OVER THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY!
TECHNOLOGY HAWKING DEPENDS ON TO DRAW ANOTHER BREATH!


YOUR SOCIETY WENT TO WAR BECAUSE OF SELFISH INDIVIDUALS ABUSING THAT TECHNOLOGY, LOCKE!
BUT WHEREAS THE DARK LEGION EPITOMIZED ALL THAT WAS BAD--
--THE GUARDIANS CAME TO SYMBOLIZE ALL THAT WAS GOOD!
COMM-PANEL!
WE'RE BEING PAGED!
BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!
SEGA-002

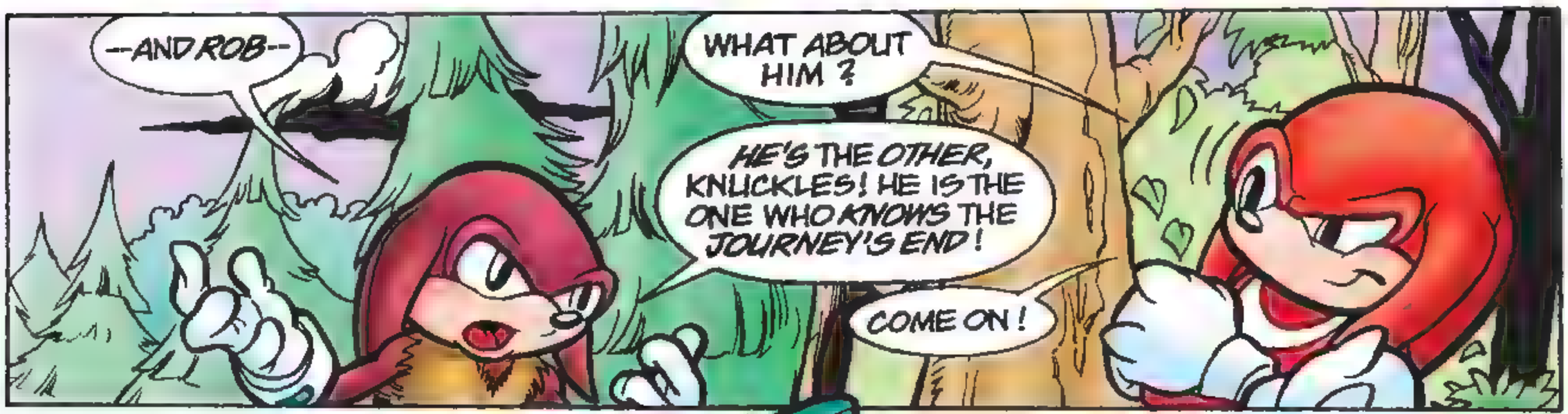

CONSTABLE REMINGTON! WHAT BRINGS YOU CALLING?
I HAVE THE LATEST REPORT FOR YOUR REVIEW, SIR!
THE KEY POINTS WILL DO FOR NOW, CONSTABLE!
AS YOU PREFER, SIR!
FOR STARTERS, THE CHAOTIX HAVE ACCEPTED THEIR ASSIGNMENT--
--ALBEIT SOMEWHAT RELUCTANTLY!
THE SOURCE OF THEIR RESISTANCE BEING--?
WHY, JULIE-SU, OF COURSE--
--AND I CAN HONESTLY SAY I SHARE THEIR FEELINGS!
TRUST ME!
THIS GOES DEEPER THAN ANY OF US MAY LIKE!
SPEAKING OF DEEP, GUARDIAN--
--LARA-LE HAS VISITED WITH ME AGAIN!*
SHE'S MOST PERSISTENT IN WANTING TO SEE YOU!
WHAT SHALL I TELL HER?
* SHE VISITED HIM THE FIRST TIME IN KNUCKLES ARCHIVES VOL.2 --EDITOR
TELL HER?
TELL HER I'LL BE IN CONTACT SOON!
LOCKE OUT!

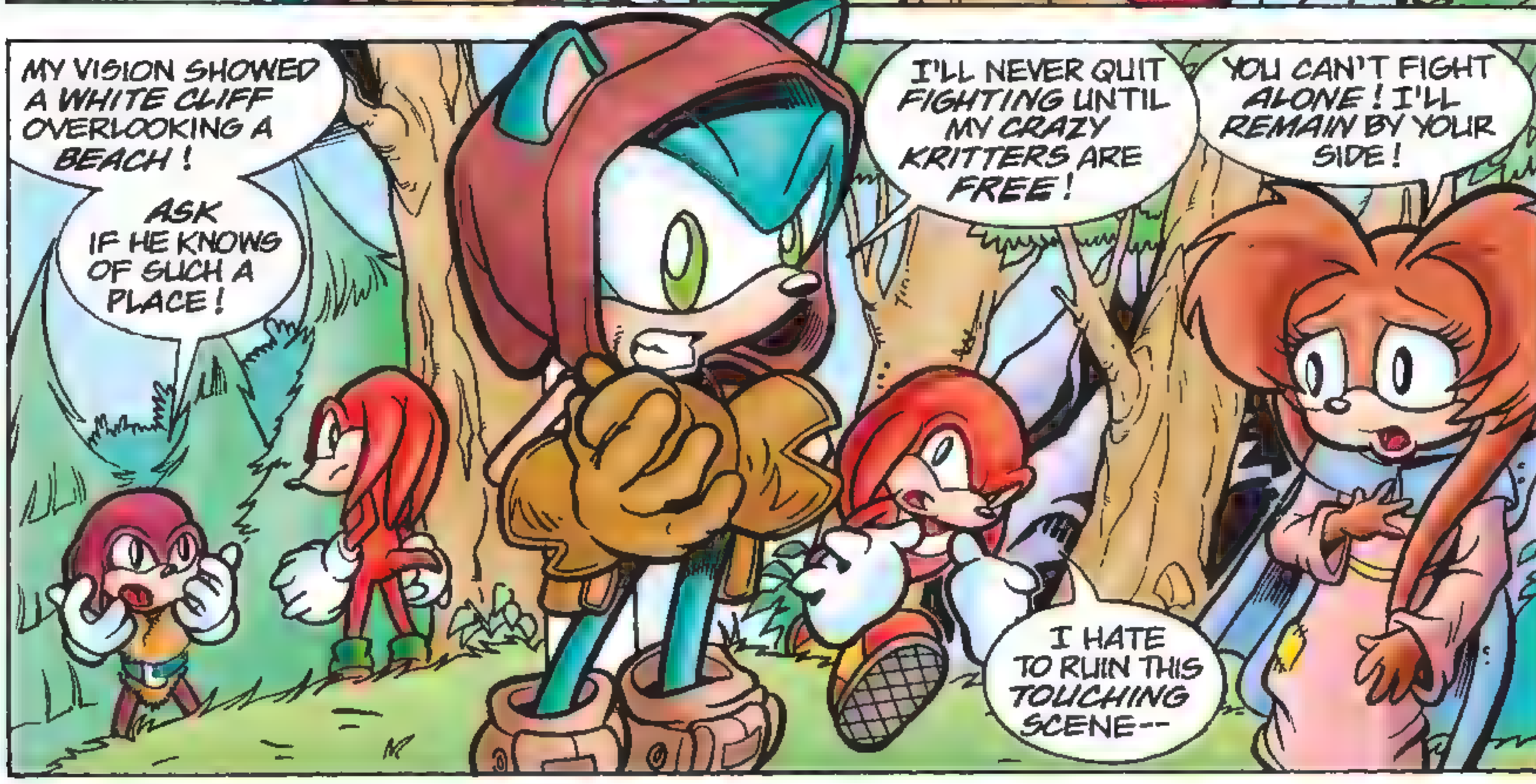
AS LOCKE CONTEMPLATES HIS NEXT COURSE OF ACTION, HALFWAY AROUND THE FACE OF MOBIUS, OTHERS PONDER THEIRS...
HOW WILL YOU FARE, NOW YOU'RE ALONE, DEAR HEART?
I'M OBLIGED TO AID MY FELLOW CRITTERS, FAIR MARI-AN!
SO WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH YOU AND THE LI'L FELLER, BLUE?
DOESN'T SEEM THE SAME WITHOUT THE GANG!
YEAH, WELL, SAL'S BUSY WITH THE PRINCESS GIG--
--SO TAILS AND I DECIDED TO CHECK THINGS OUT WHILE MOBOTROPOLIS IS BEING REBUILT!*
* CHECK OUT SONIC ARCHIVES VOL. 15 FOR THE DETAILS! --EDITOR
YOU'RE WELCOME TO DROP IN ON THE FLOATING ISLAND!
THANKS! THAT MAY BE--
--EH?
SONIC!!
I FOUND THE BI-PLANE!
ALL SYSTEMS ARE GO!
TIME TO BOOGIE, RED!
BE COOL!
YOU TOO, BLUE!
DON'T BE A STRANGER!
A WORD WITH YOU, IF I MAY, KNUCKLES!

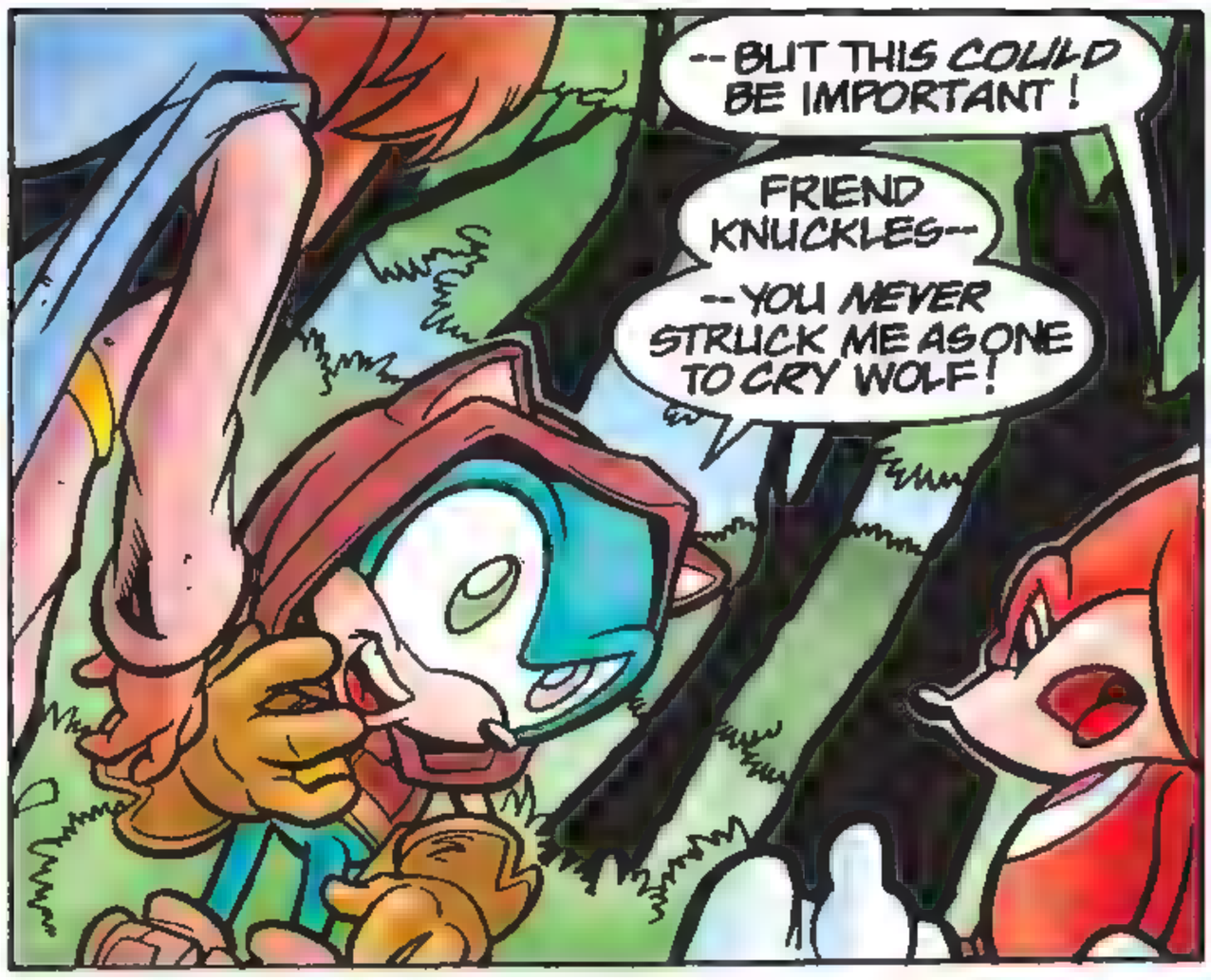

AT THIS POINT, I COULD USE A FEW. WHAT'S UP?
I MAY HAVE MISINTERPRETED THE TOMES--
--REGARDING THE MYSTICAL OTHER!
OH?

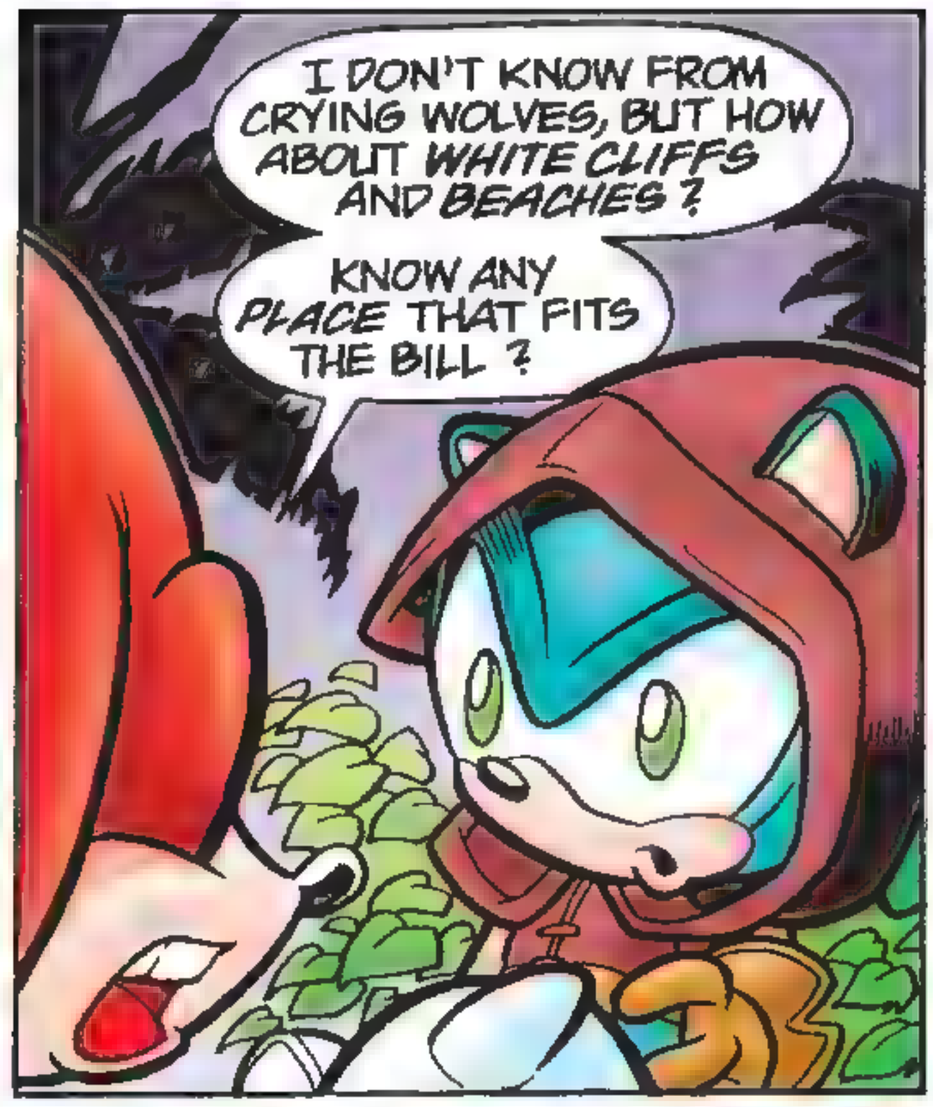
FACING WHAT I FEARED WERE THE FINAL MOMENTS OF LIFE, I HAD A VISION!
A VISION OF-- WHAT?

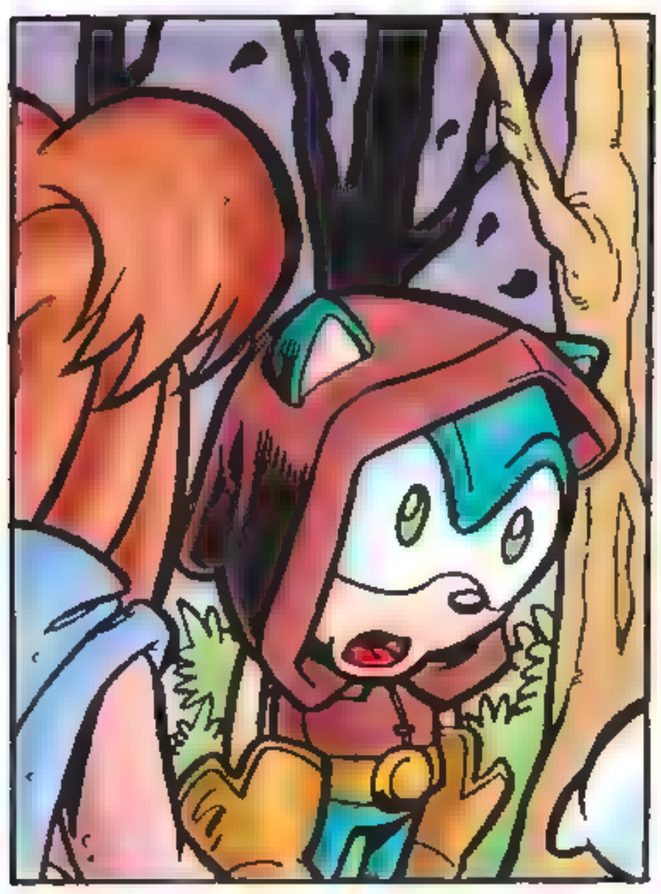
A CITY TO STAGGER THE IMAGINATION--
FELLOW BRETHREN-- SUCH AS I NEVER BORE WITNESS TO--

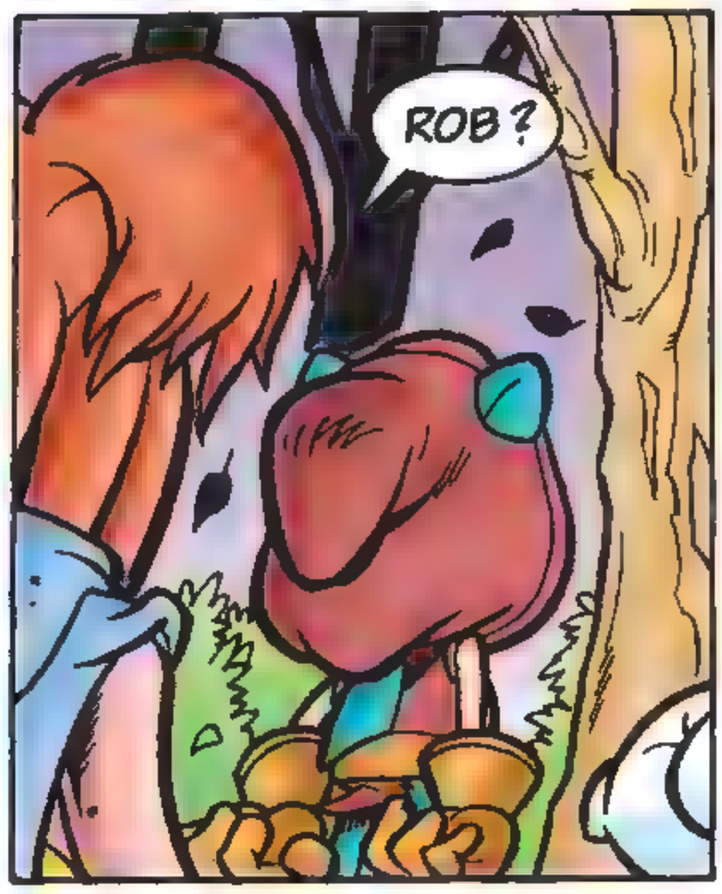

--AND ROB--
WHAT ABOUT HIM?
HE'S THE OTHER, KNUCKLES! HE IS THE ONE WHO KNOWS THE JOURNEY'S END!
COME ON!

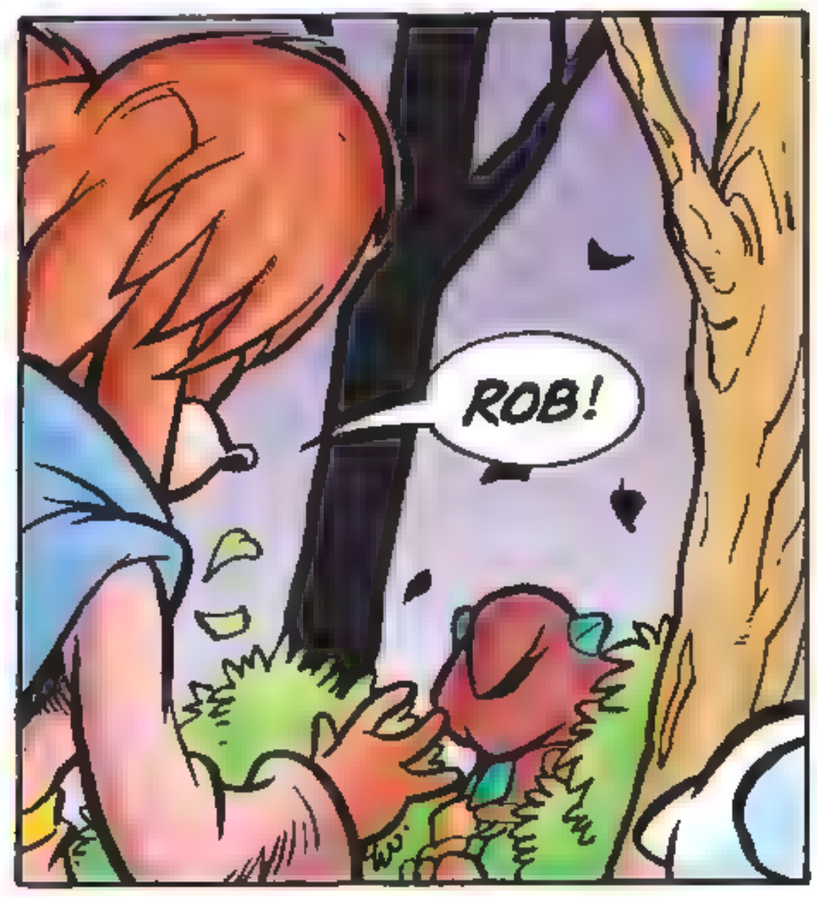

MY VISION SHOWED A WHITE CLIFF OVERLOOKING A BEACH!
ASK IF HE KNOWS OF SUCH A PLACE!
I'LL NEVER QUIT FIGHTING UNTIL MY CRAZY KRITTERS ARE FREE!
YOU CAN'T FIGHT ALONE! I'LL REMAIN BY YOUR SIDE!
I HATE TO RUIN THIS TOUCHING SCENE--

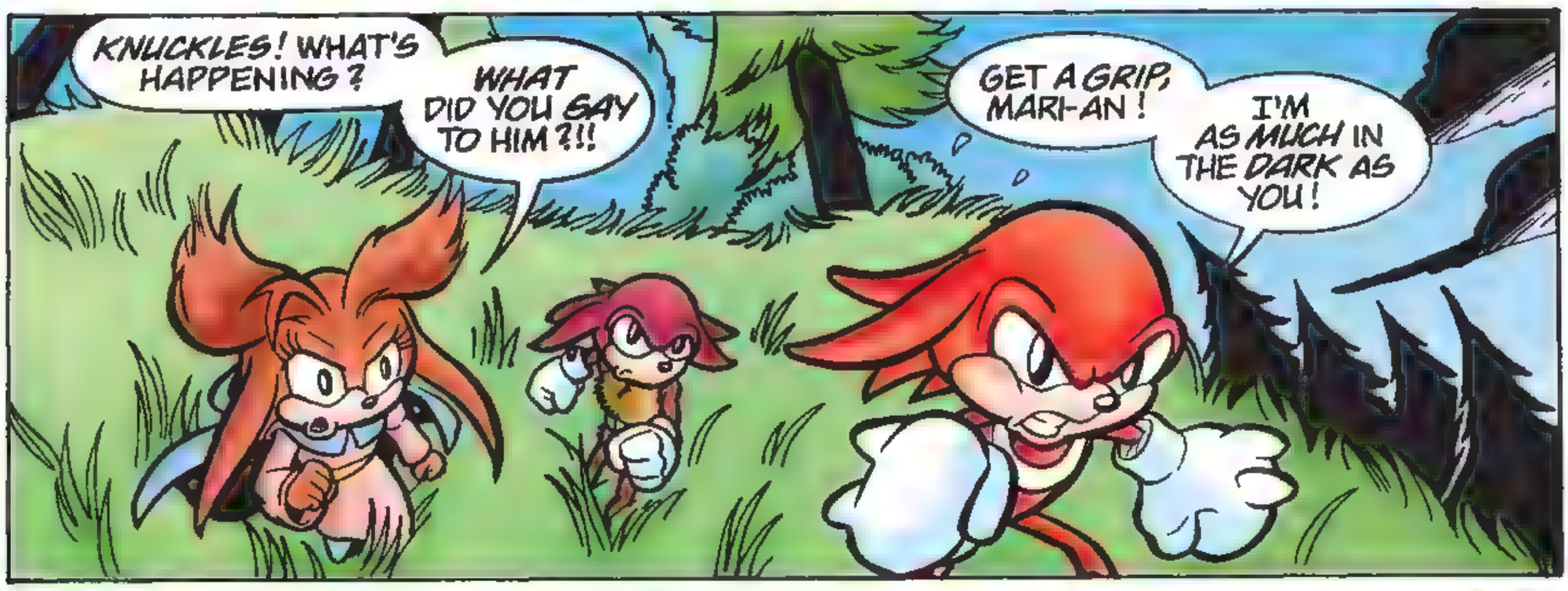

--BUT THIS COULD BE IMPORTANT!
FRIEND KNUCKLES--
--YOU NEVER STRUCK ME AS ONE TO CRY WOLF!

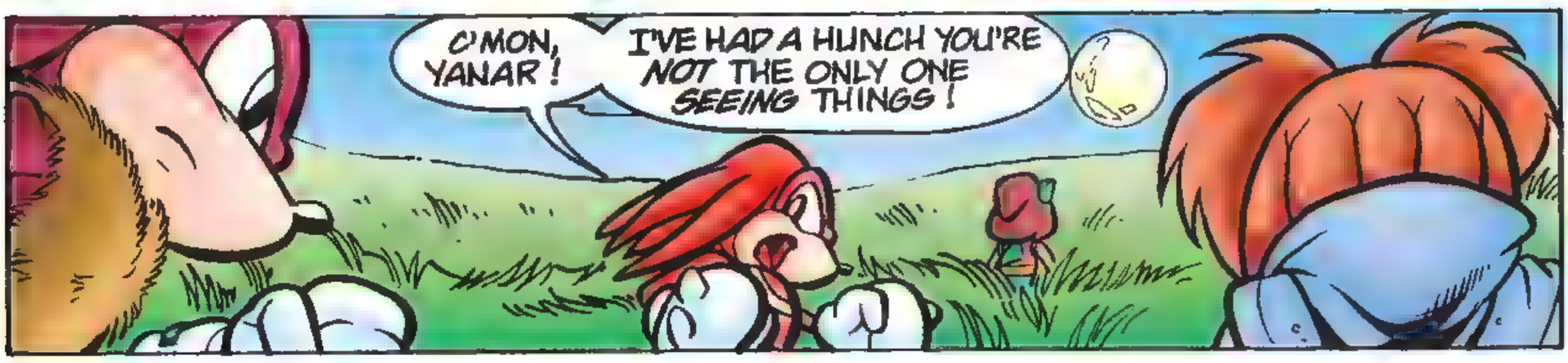

I DON'T KNOW FROM CRYING WOLVES, BUT HOW ABOUT WHITE CLIFFS AND BEACHES?
KNOW ANY PLACE THAT FITS THE BILL?




ROB?

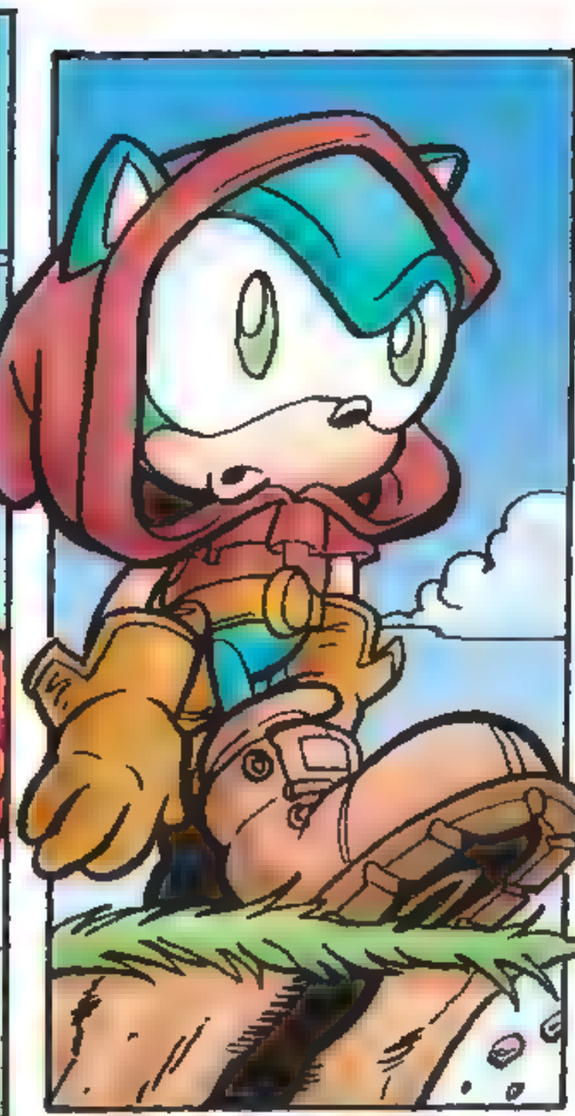

ROB!

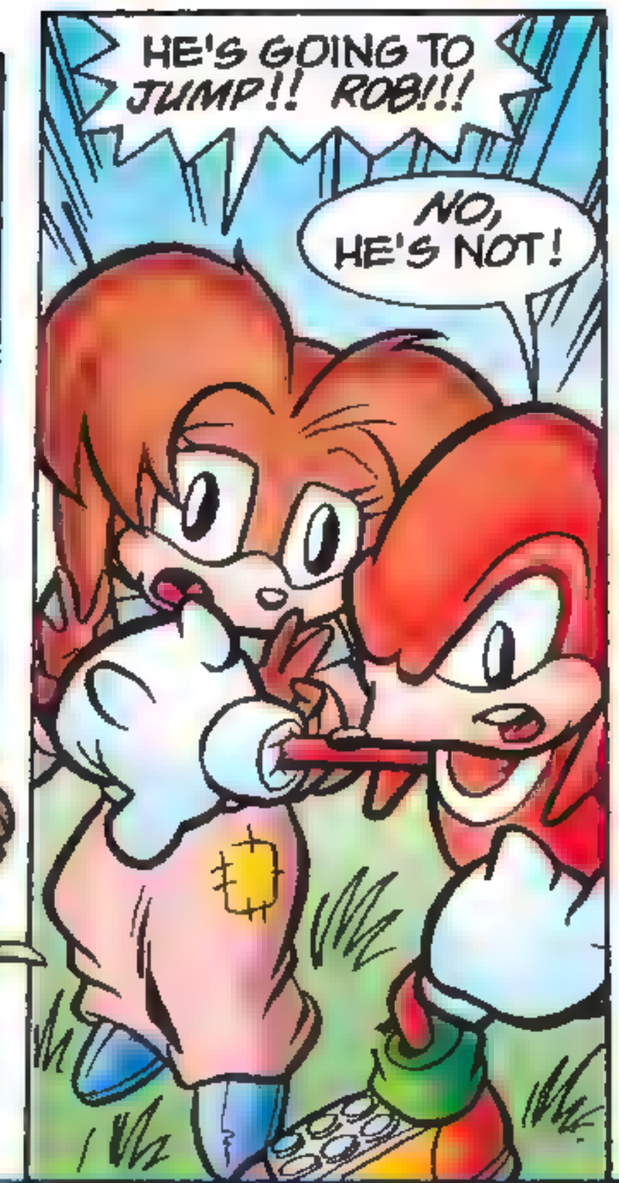

KNUCKLES! WHAT'S HAPPENING?
WHAT DID YOU SAY TO HIM?!!
GET A GRIP, MARI-AN!
I'M AS MUCH IN THE DARK AS YOU!

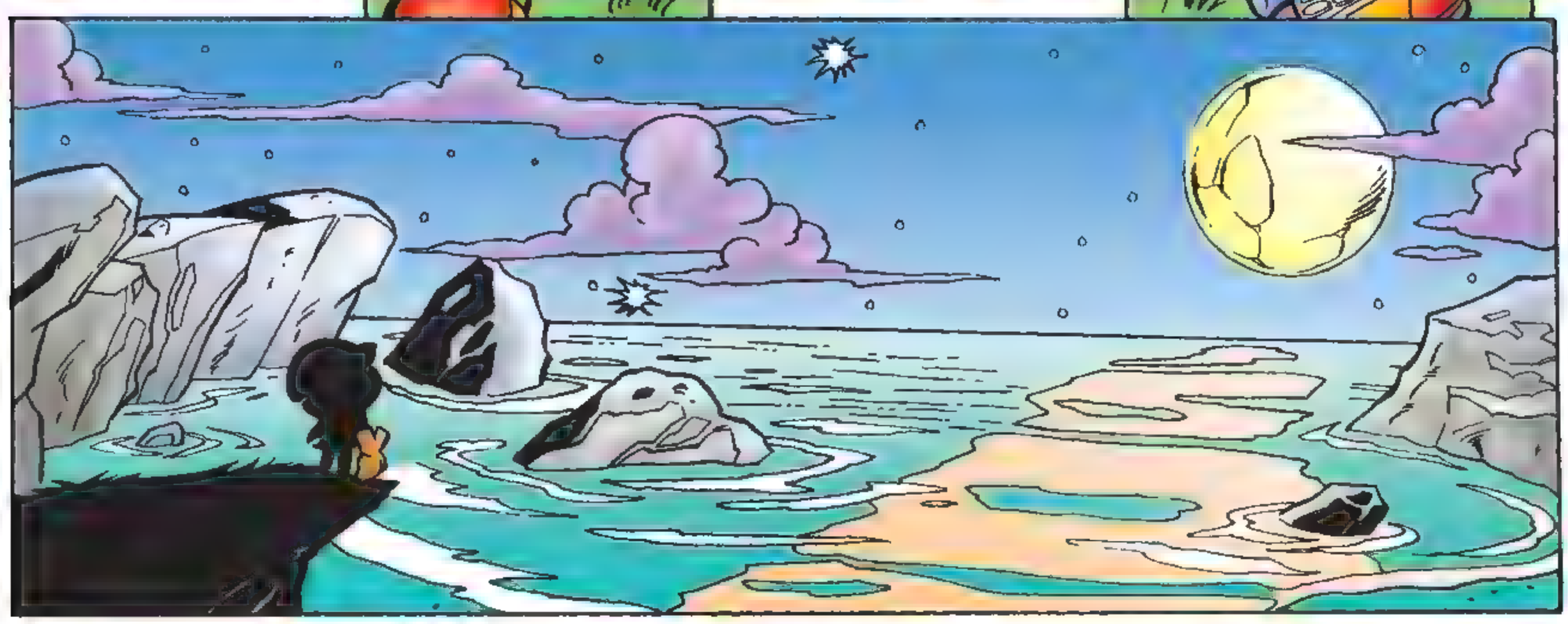

C'MON, YANAR!
I'VE HAD A HUNCH YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE SEEING THINGS!

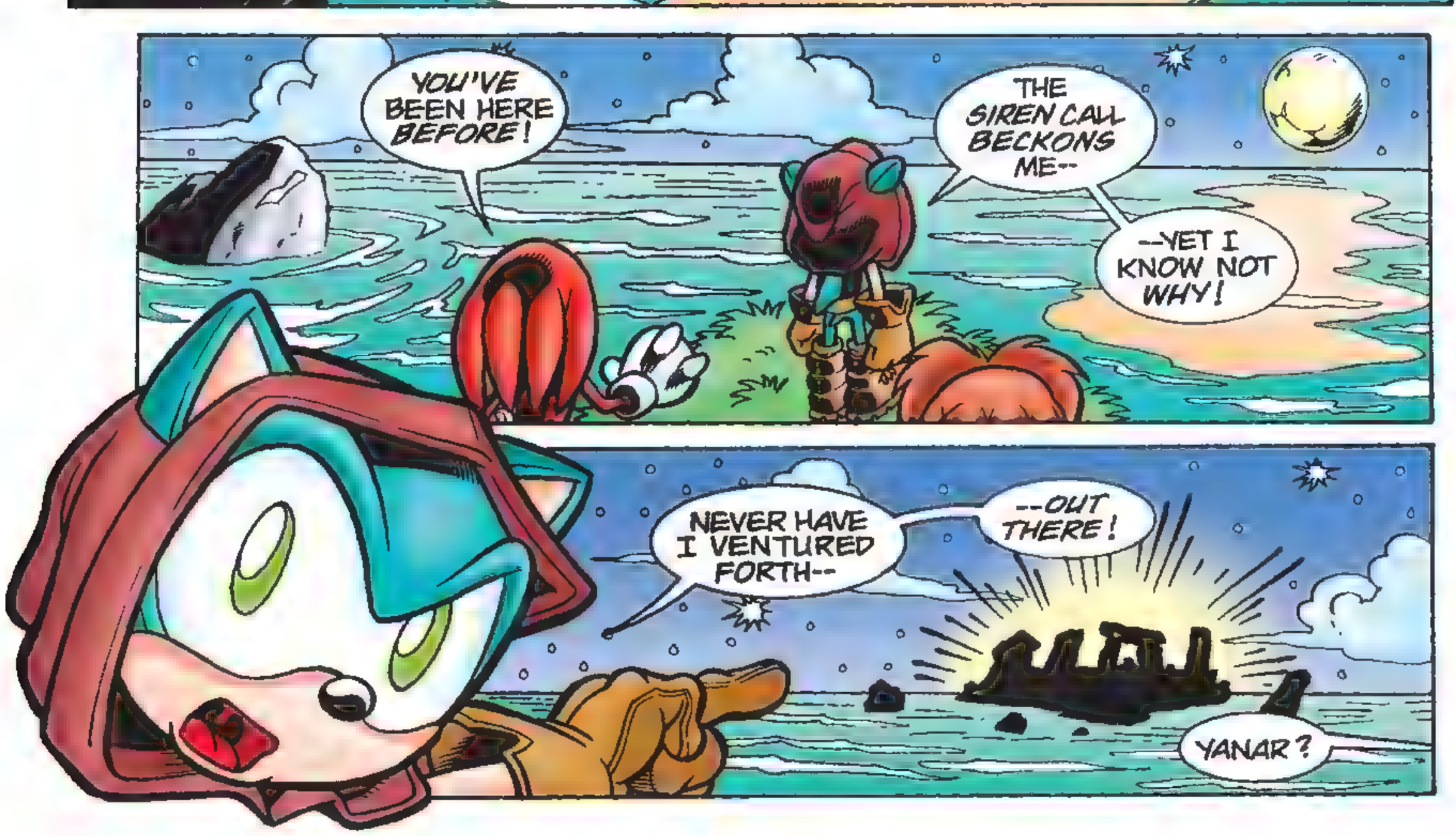
HURRY, KNUCKLES!

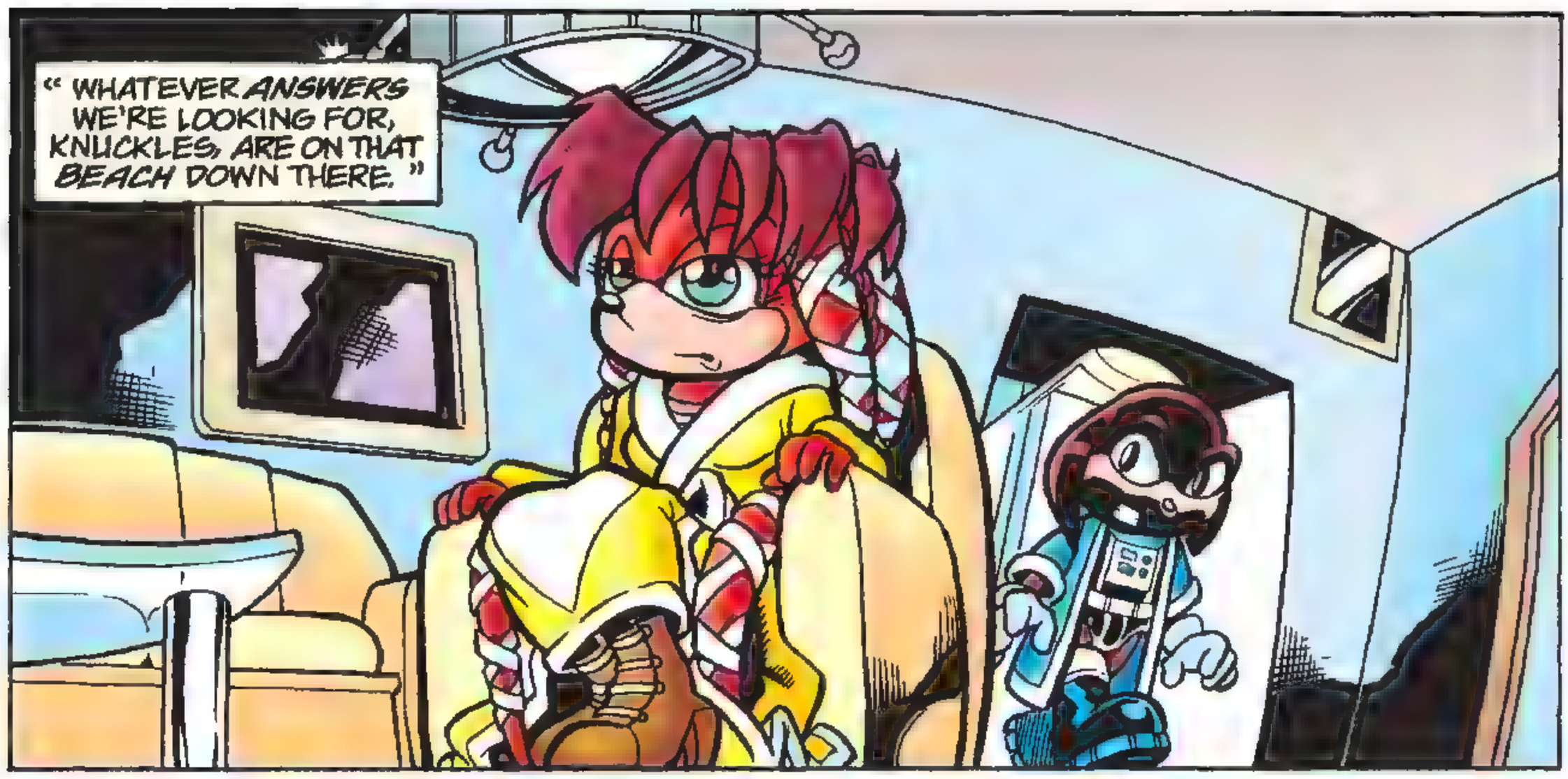
HE'S WALKING TOWARDS THE LEDGE!!

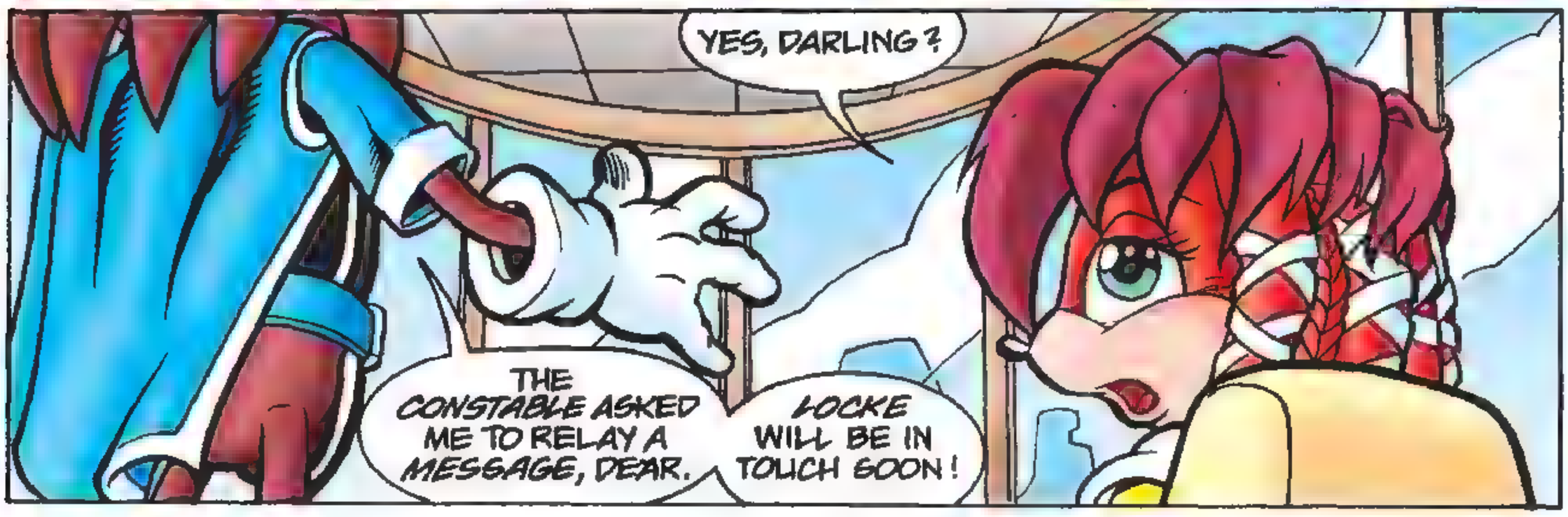



HE'S GOING TO JUMP!! ROB!!!
NO, HE'S NOT!




YOU'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE!
THE SIREN CALL BECKONS ME--
--YET I KNOW NOT WHY!
NEVER HAVE I VENTURED FORTH--
--OUT THERE!
YANAR?


" WHATEVER ANSWERS WE'RE LOOKING FOR, KNUCKLES, ARE ON THAT BEACH DOWN THERE. "


YES, DARLING?
THE CONSTABLE ASKED ME TO RELAY A MESSAGE, DEAR.
LOCKE WILL BE IN TOUCH SOON!

THAT WAS ALL?
THE CONSTABLE IS ONE FOR BREVITY!

NO, MORE LIKE LOCKE--

"--WHO NEVER WAS ONE MUCH FOR CONVERSATION."

I'VE NEVER SOJOURNED TO THAT FAIR ISLE. MY HOME IS THIS FOREST.

BUT ALWAYS I'VE STOOD WATCH.

YOU'RE A SENTRY?

AYE! AND ONLY RIGHTFUL SOULS CAN GET PAST ME!

SUCH ARE YOU!

HOW DO YOU KNOW WE'RE--WORTHY?

SOME THINGS, MY FRIEND, ARE SEEN WITH THE HEART!

IT MAKES SENSE, KNUCKLES!

THE TOMES STATE THE LAST LEG OF THE JOURNEY REQUIRES A BOLD HEART TO PASS UPON ALBION'S WAKE!

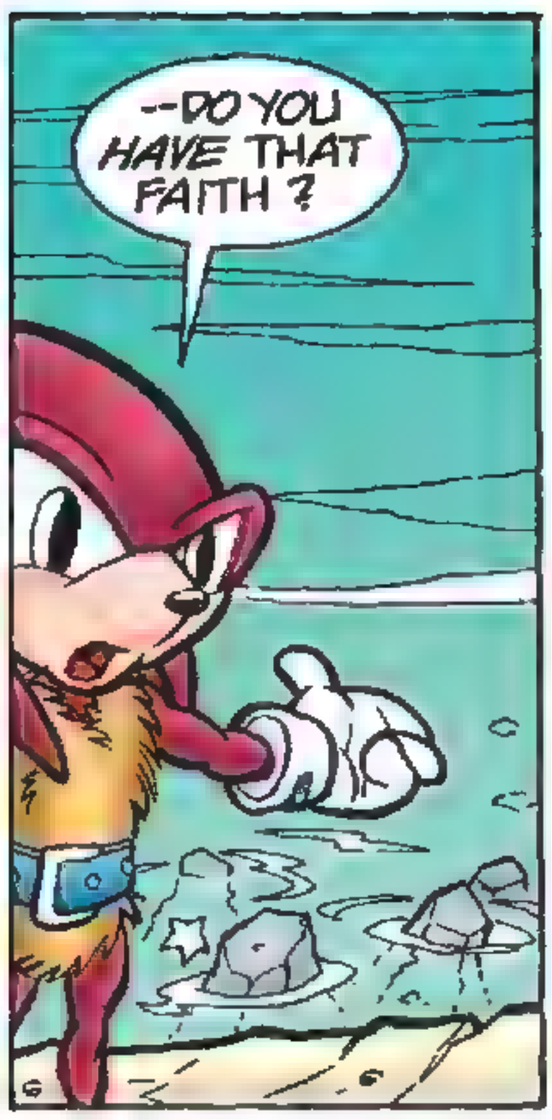
I CAN'T EVEN SWIM!

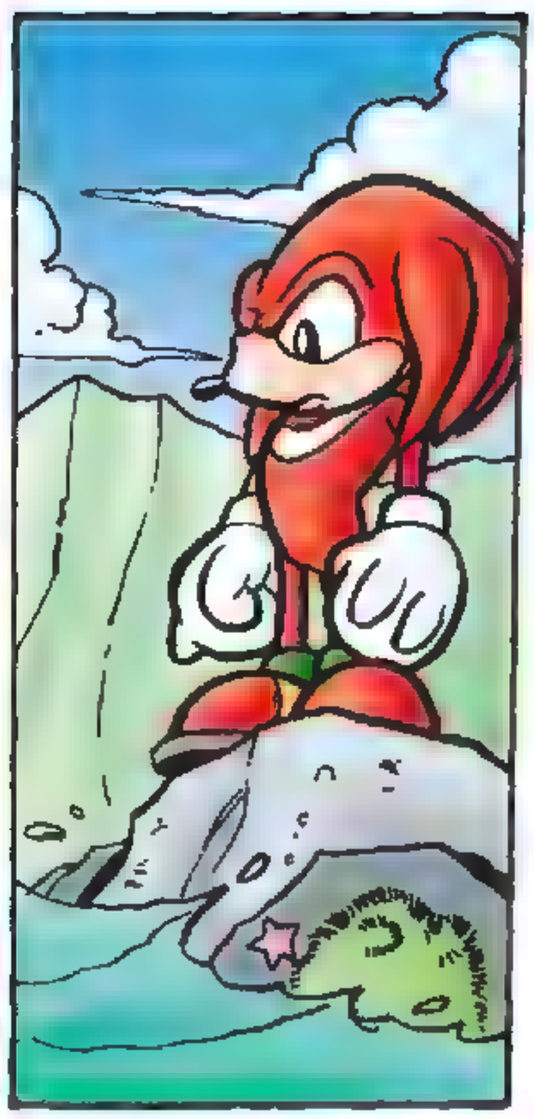
YOU MEAN WALK ACROSS THE WATER?

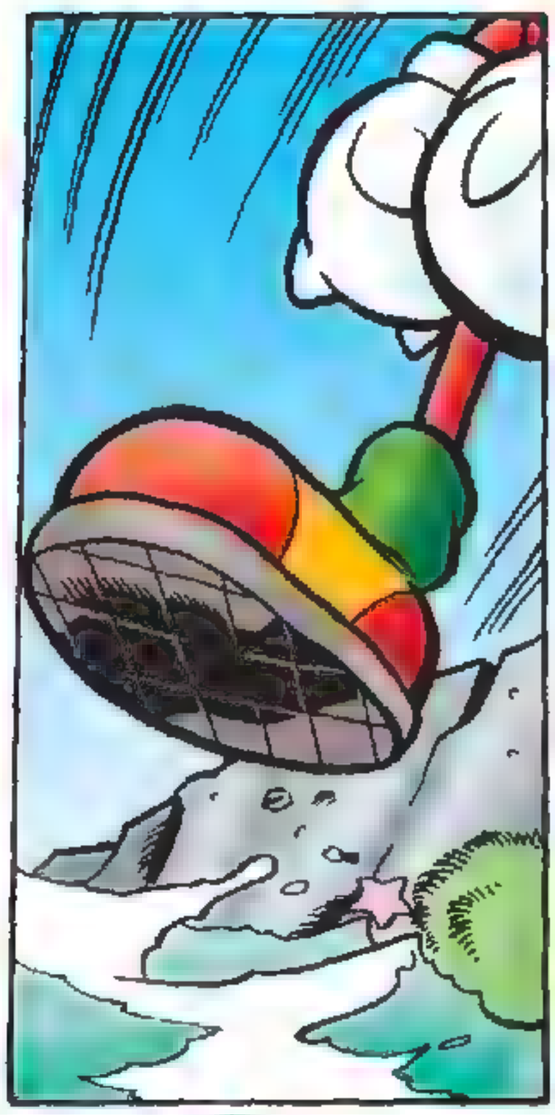
I MERELY STATE WHAT HAS BEEN WRITTEN!

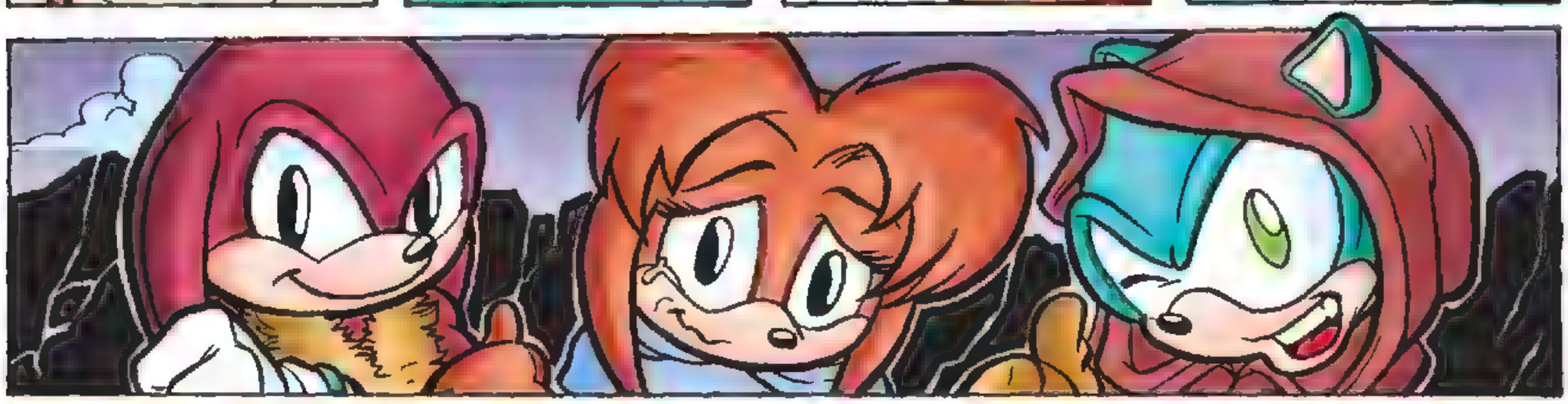
ALL IT REQUIRES IS A LEAP OF FAITH!

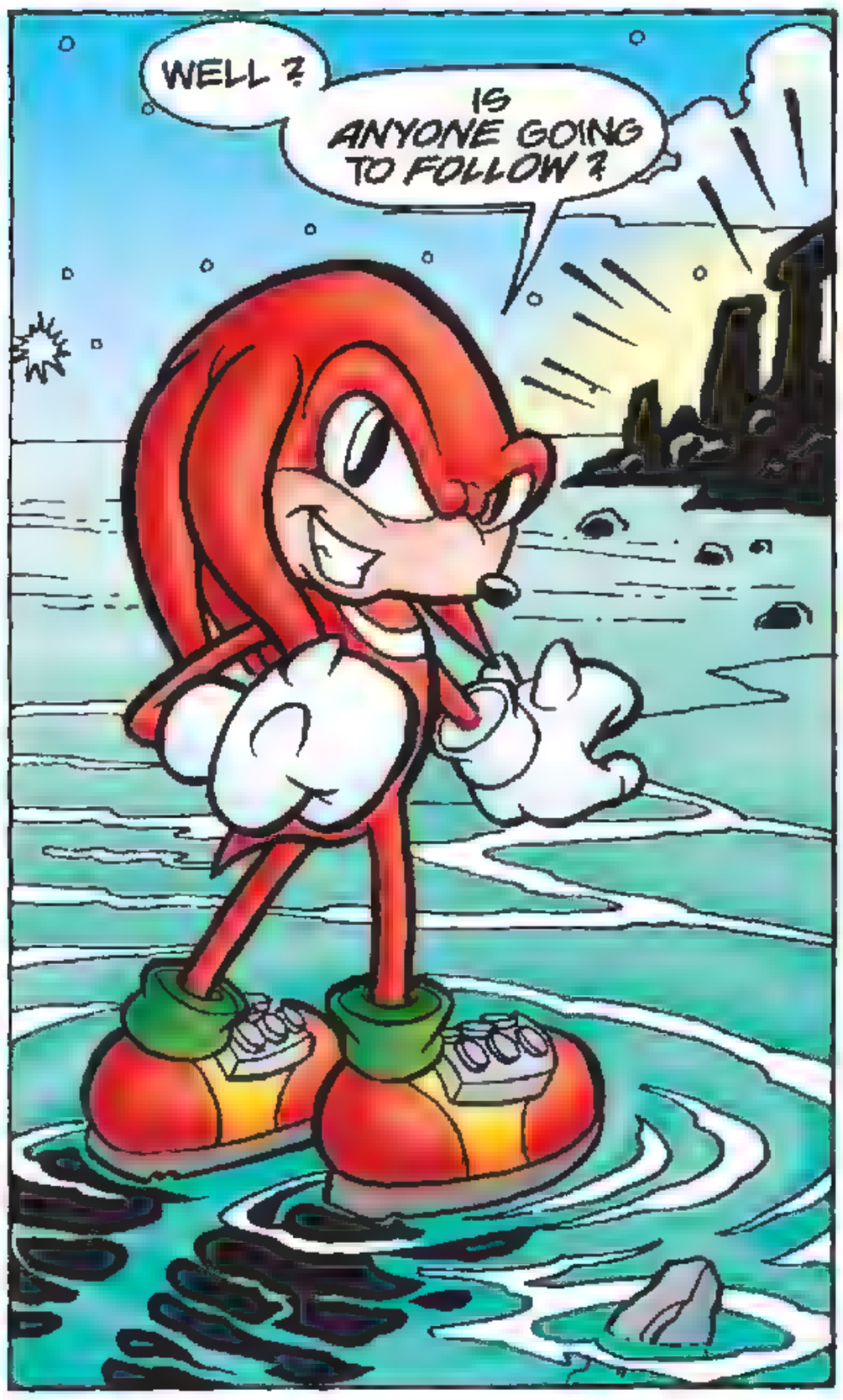
THE QUESTION IS--

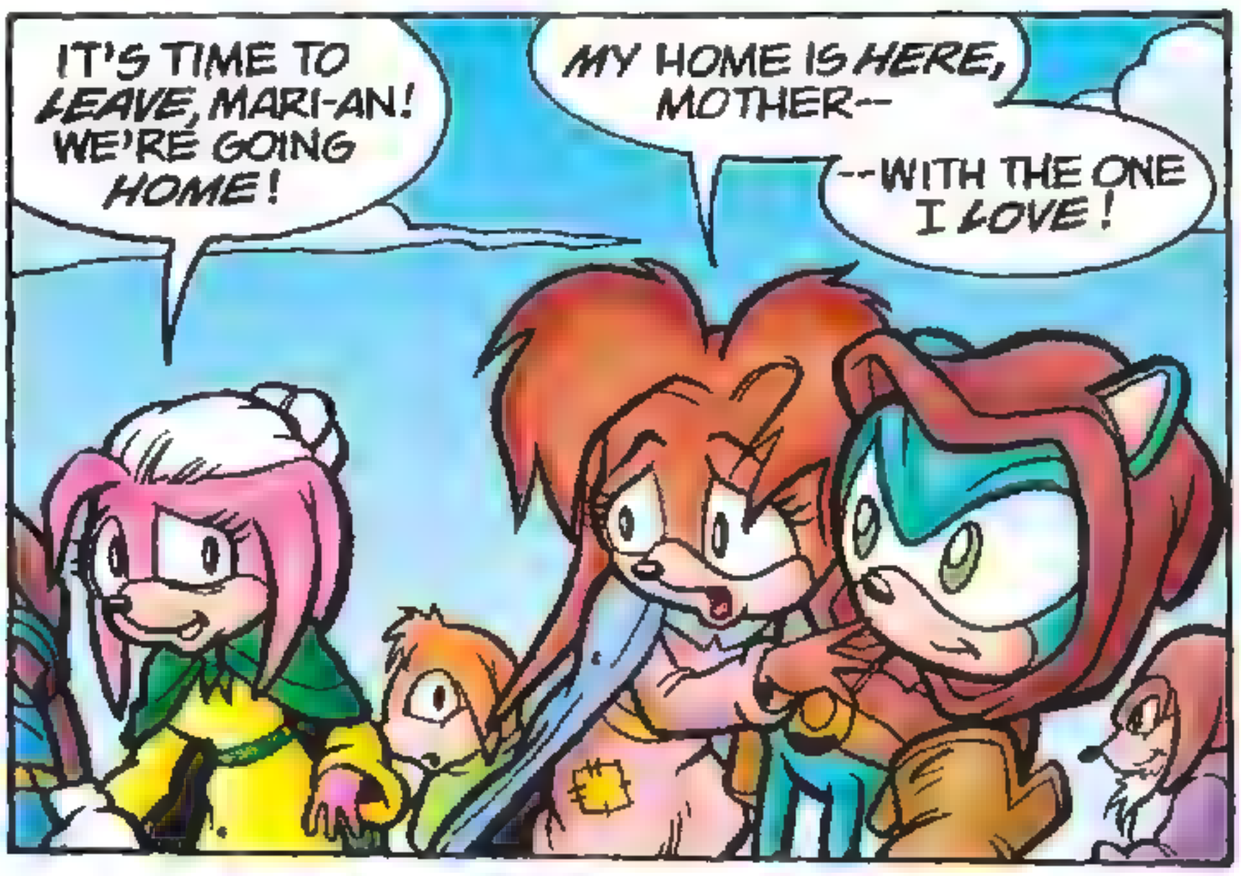

--DO YOU HAVE THAT FAITH ?

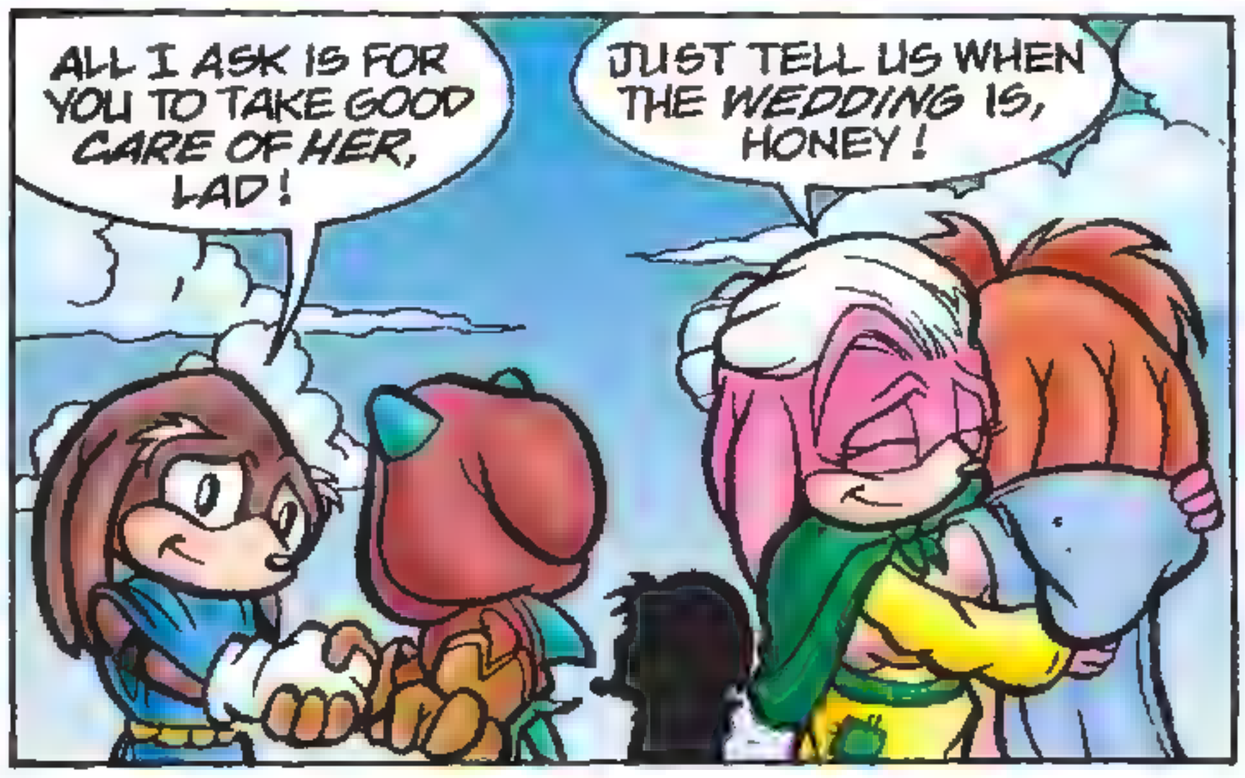


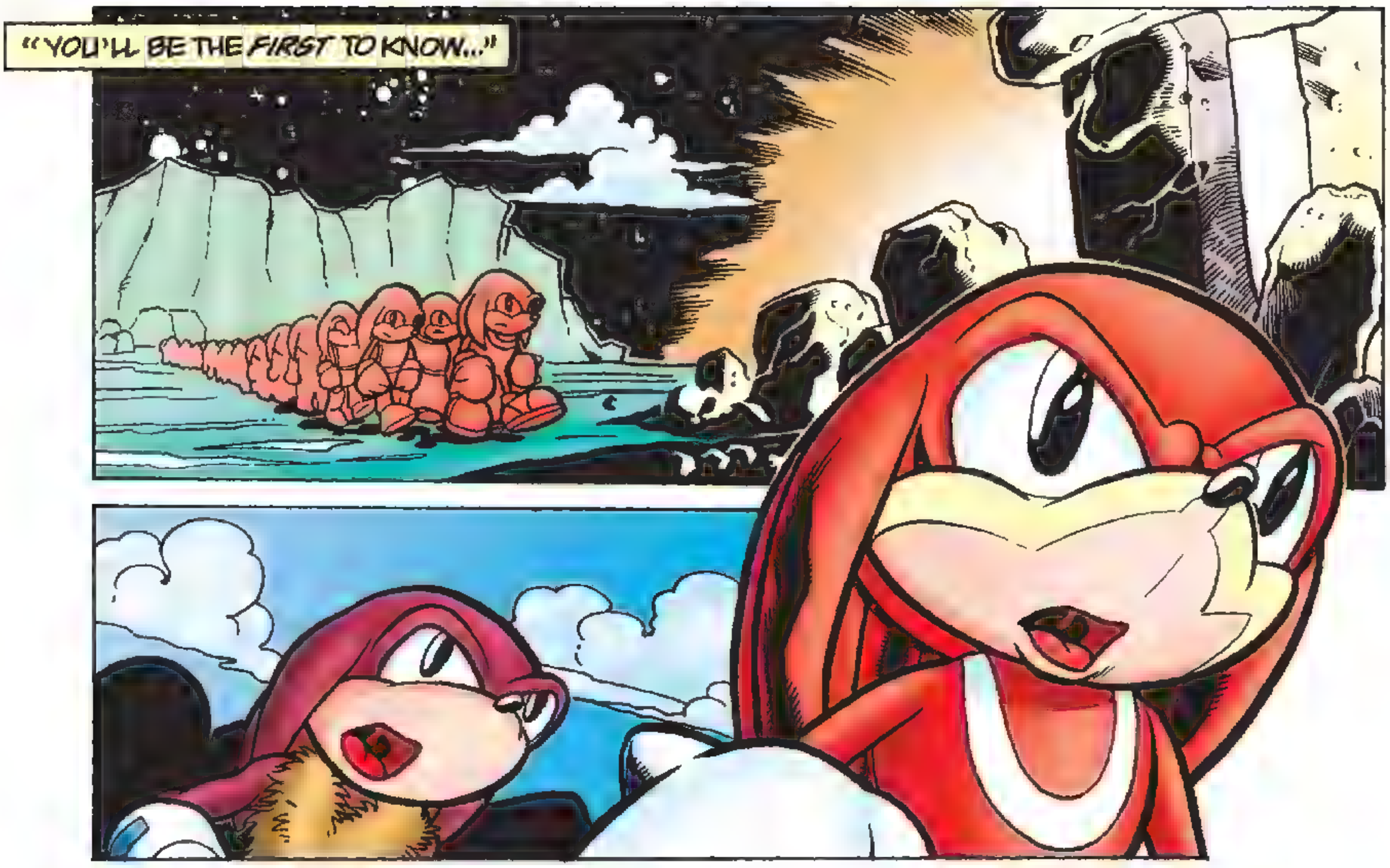


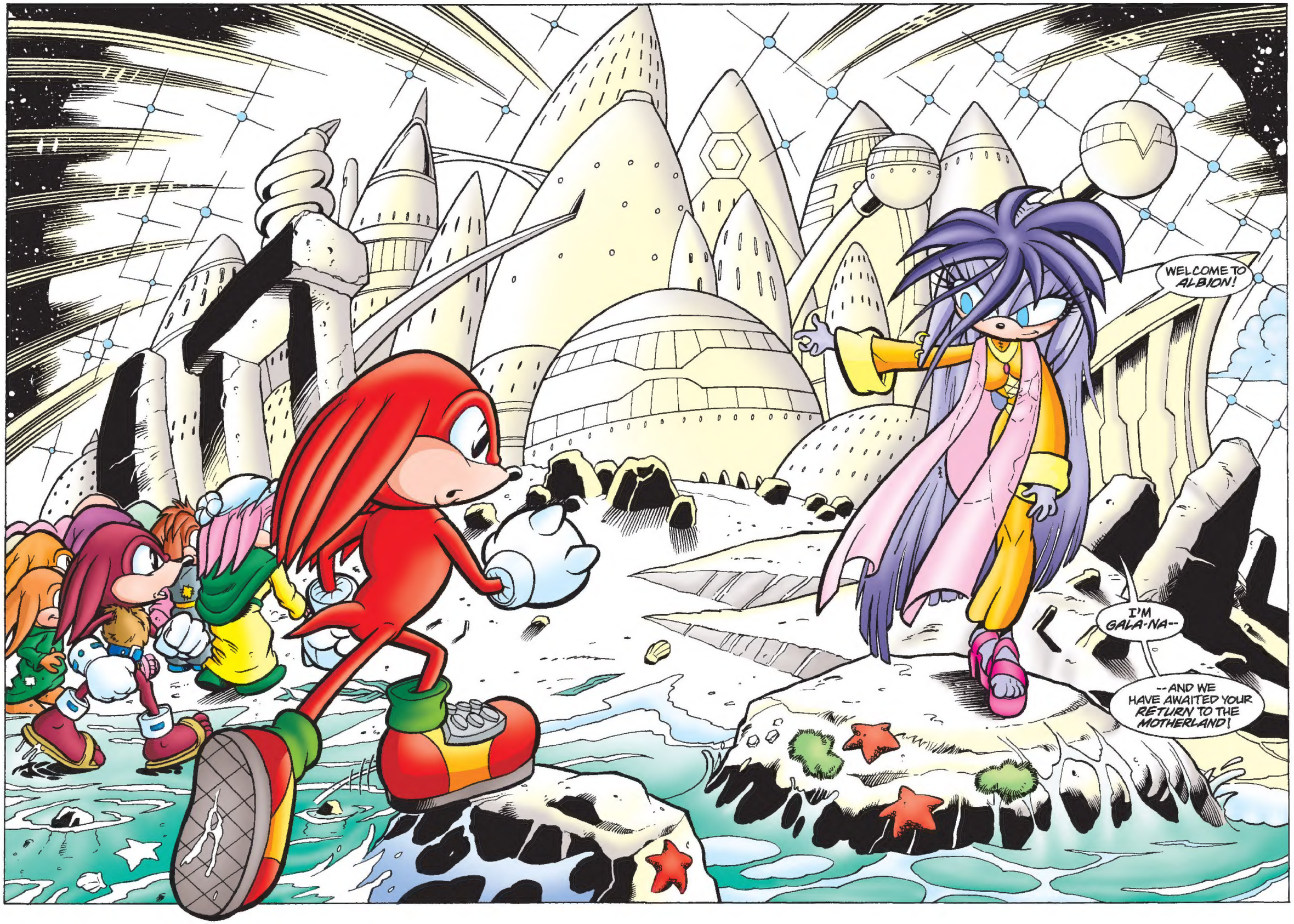


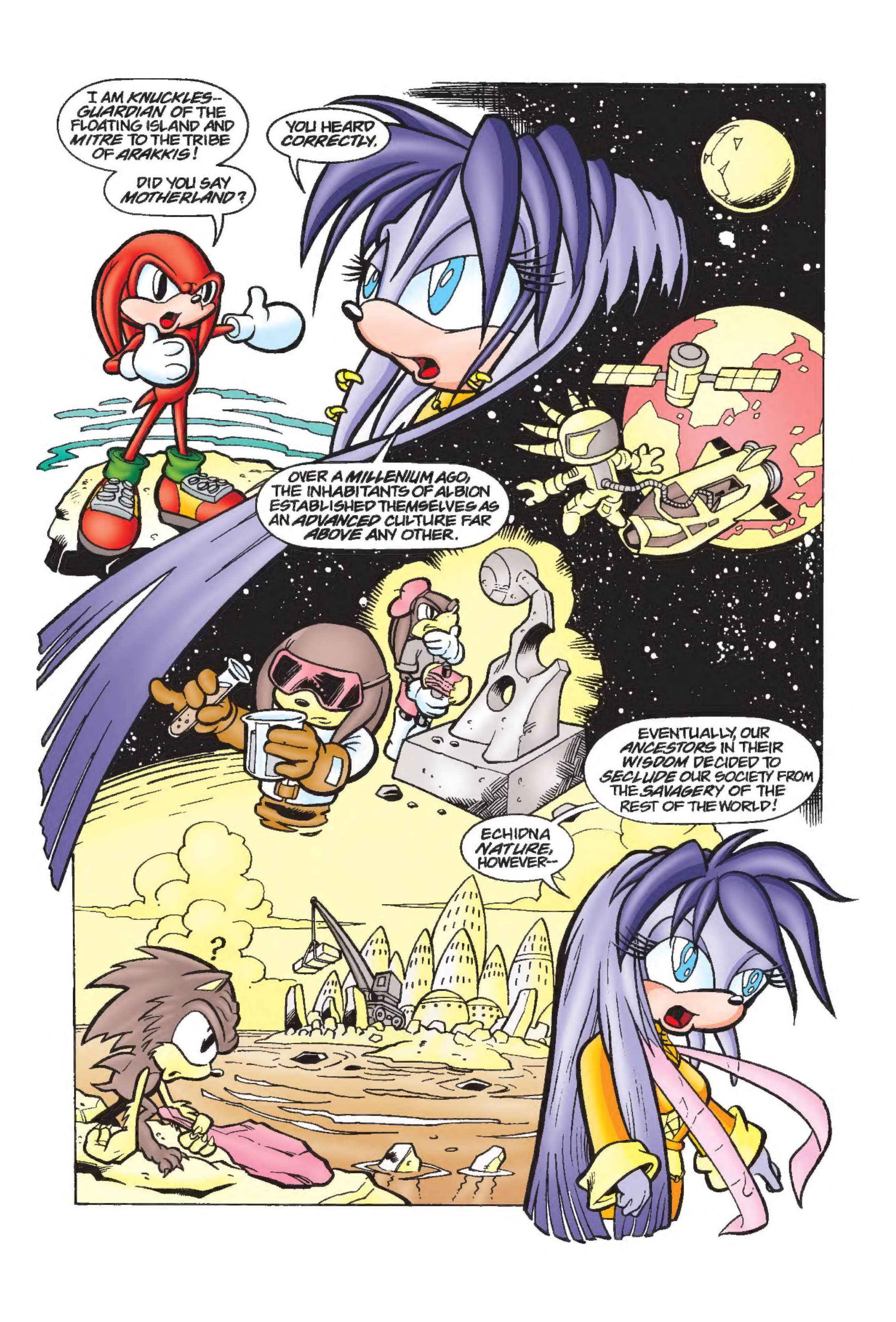

WELL ?
IS ANYONE GOING TO FOLLOW ?


IT'S TIME TO LEAVE, MARI-AN! WE'RE GOING HOME!
MY HOME IS HERE, MOTHER--
--WITH THE ONE I LOVE!

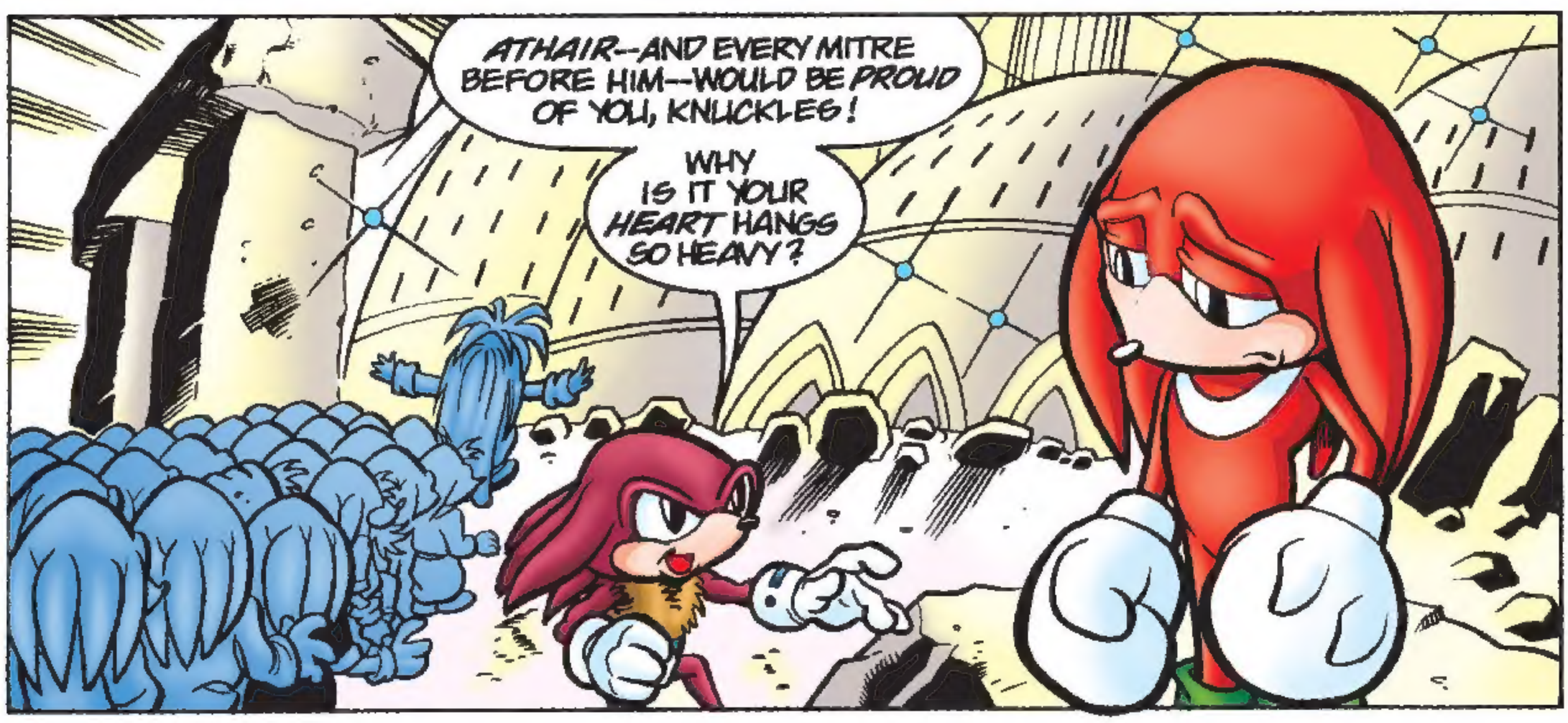

ALL I ASK IS FOR YOU TO TAKE GOOD CARE OF HER, LAD!
JUST TELL US WHEN THE WEDDING IS, HONEY!

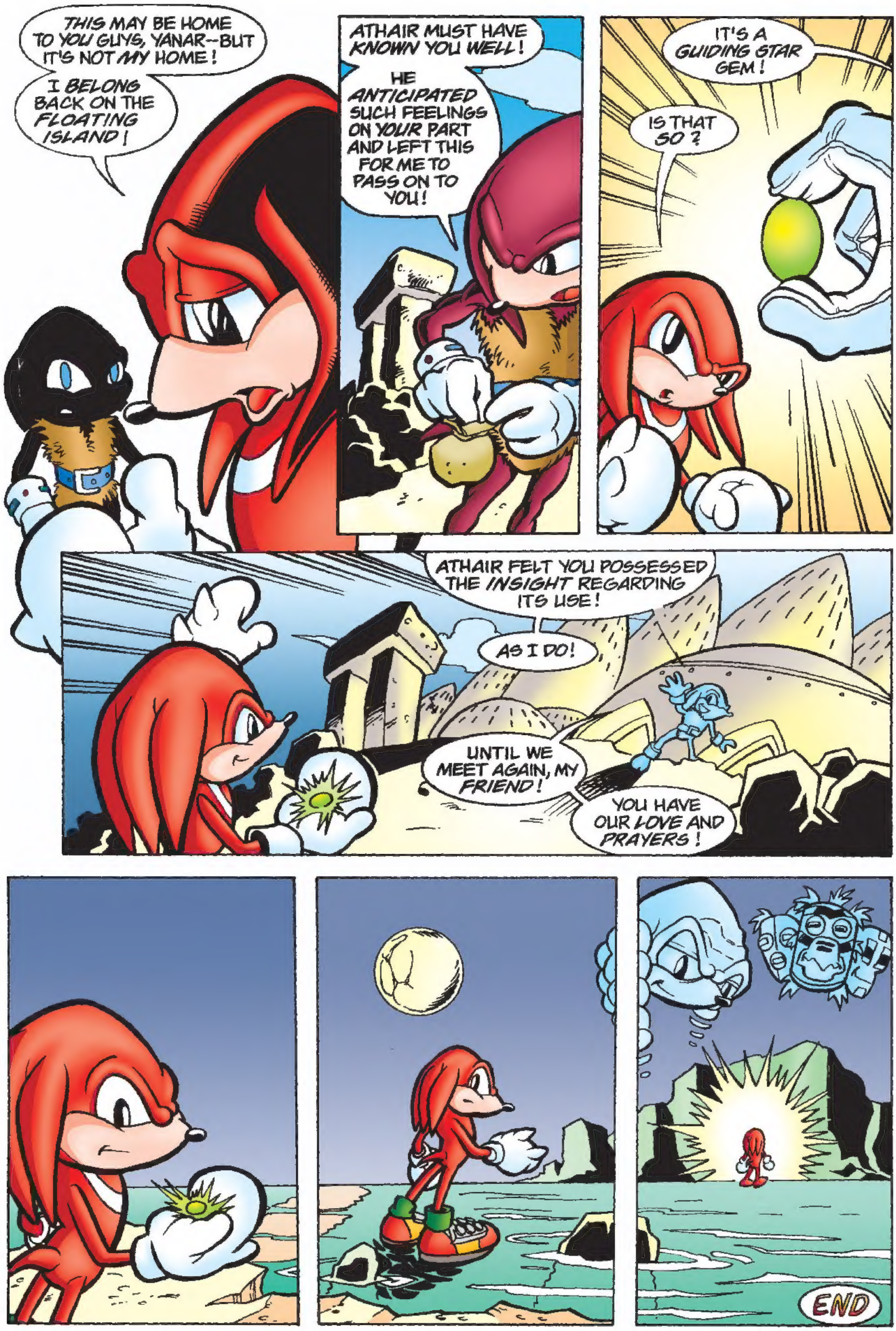

"YOU'LL BE THE FIRST TO KNOW..."


WELCOME TO ALBION!
I'M GALA-NA--
--AND WE HAVE AWAITED YOUR RETURN TO THE MOTHERLAND!


I AM KNUCKLES-- GUARDIAN OF THE FLOATING ISLAND AND MITRE TO THE TRIBE OF ARAKKIS!
DID YOU SAY MOTHERLAND?
YOU HEARD CORRECTLY.
OVER A MILLENIUM AGO, THE INHABITANTS OF ALBION ESTABLISHED THEMSELVES AS AN ADVANCED CULTURE FAR ABOVE ANY OTHER.
EVENTUALLY, OUR ANCESTORS IN THEIR WISDOM DECIDED TO SECLUDE OUR SOCIETY FROM THE SAVAGERY OF THE REST OF THE WORLD!
ECHIDNA NATURE, HOWEVER--
?

--IS DRIVEN BY THE NEED TO STRIVE FOR HIGHER LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT!
EVENTUALLY, A FEW HARDY SOULS VENTURED FORTH--
--EVENTUALLY CREATING THE COLONY OF ECHIDNAOPOLIS IN DOWNUNDA!
THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, EH?
WE HAVE WATCHED WITH CONSIDERABLE SADNESS AT OUR BRETHREN'S PLIGHT THROUGH THE AGES.
ALBION HAS ALWAYS STOOD AS A SANCTUARY FOR ECHIDNAS EVERYWHERE--
--AND IT IS WITH GREAT JOY WE CELEBRATE YOUR JOURNEY'S END!
ENTER NOW! RECLAIM WHAT IS YOURS!


ATHAIR--AND EVERY MITRE BEFORE HIM--WOULD BE PROUD OF YOU, KNUCKLES!
WHY IS IT YOUR HEART HANGS SO HEAVY?


THIS MAY BE HOME TO YOU GUYS, YANAR--BUT IT'S NOT MY HOME!
I BELONG BACK ON THE FLOATING ISLAND!
ATHAIR MUST HAVE KNOWN YOU WELL!
HE ANTICIPATED SUCH FEELINGS ON YOUR PART AND LEFT THIS FOR ME TO PASS ON TO YOU!
IT'S A GUIDING STAR GEM!
IS THAT SO?
ATHAIR FELT YOU POSSESSED THE INSIGHT REGARDING ITS USE!
AS I DO!
UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN, MY FRIEND!
YOU HAVE OUR LOVE AND PRAYERS!
END